

ONCE UPON AN OBJECT:
DEEP COLLECTION LESSONS IN MATERIAL RELATIONSHIPS

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I AT MĀNOA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS
IN
PACIFIC ISLANDS STUDIES

MAY 2017

By
Shelby Pykare

Thesis Committee:

Alexander Mawyer, Chairperson
Terence Wesley-Smith
David Hanlon

Keywords: museums, deep collections, objects

We certify that we have read this thesis and that, in our opinion, it is satisfactory in scope and quality as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Pacific Islands Studies.

Alexander Mawyer, *Chairperson*

Terence Wesley-Smith

David Hanlon

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	5
ABSTRACT	6
PREFACE	7
INTRODUCTION	9
 CHAPTER ONE: FROM THE OUTSIDE	20
An Overview of Collecting.....	21
The History of Museums.....	27
New Museology.....	35
The Dialogic Museum Model.....	41
The Cultural Center Model.....	45
 CHAPTER TWO: FROM THE INSIDE	51
What's in a Name?.....	52
Object Classifications.....	60
Object Interpretations.....	63
Museum Space/Place.....	69
The Question of Accessibility.....	72
The Question of Agency.....	78
 CHAPTER THREE: VOICES FROM THREE MUSEUMS	82
Te Papa Tongarewa.....	82
The Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum.....	89
The American Museum of Natural History.....	90
A Name Revisited.....	92
Agency and Access Revisited.....	98
Important Projects.....	110
Digital Collections.....	111
Museum Catalogues.....	114
Ho'omaka Hou Research Initiative.....	115
Open Day.....	117
The Question of Ownership.....	118
Findings.....	123
 CONCLUSION	127
WORKS CITED	134

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis would have been impossible without the incredible amounts of support I received throughout the entire process. I must first thank the Center for Pacific Island Studies for the Na Nei Tou I Loloma Award, which allowed me to travel to Aotearoa for an absolutely phenomenal research experience.

Thank you to my committee members who were always encouraging, at every turn along this path. Thank you to Alex Mawyer who took time week after week to meet with me from the very beginning and work through the ups, downs, and uncertainty all while entertaining my frequent superhero tangents. To Terence Wesley-Smith who helped me take up this museum project when I was feeling particularly lost, and who gave me the one piece of advice that kept me going at all costs through this thesis, “The most important thing about a Masters is to finish it!” To David Hanlon with whom I took my very first Pacific history class and who confirmed for me I was in the exact right place.

Thank you to Sean Mallon, Teresia Teaiwa, Mānoa Teaiwa, and Vaitoa Mallon who graciously opened their home and family to me during my time in Aotearoa. Words cannot express how much their generosity and hospitality meant to me, and I send you all the love and prayers. Teresia, without you this thesis would not have come to fruition, thank you for absolutely everything.

Thank you to the rocks that are my family who have always loved and supported me, and special shout out to the light of our lives that is Relly. Finally, to Dick, Jason, Tim, and Damian, with whom I have found a part of myself I didn’t know I was missing, and who inspire me to do the impossible and fly.

ABSTRACT

Museums house many things. Some of these are highly visible while others are rarely seen. Over the last years, a great deal of curatorial and theoretical attention in museums studies has been directed towards the representation, contextualization, and reframing of regularly displayed objects. This changing collections period has included consideration of increased community access to the presentation and meaning-making surrounding objects. However, there are entire classes of objects that are rarely visible and never move from behind the scenes. Many of these objects have received scant scholarly treatment and have not been touched by source communities who lack access to museums' deep storage collections. This thesis emerges from the context of a new Oceania, where community relations are highly prioritized and are a site of intense and passionate action and scholarly focus. It also emerges in a new museum age, where museums are struggling to become more self-reflexive as the cultural center model gains popularity. This work seeks to understand the place of shadowy and purportedly "secondary" tier objects in museum collections, and how three of the region's most significant museums are working with their deep collections, and with both source and service communities. This thesis asks: how are Oceanic communities becoming aware of deep collections and engaging with them? How are museum specialists, with limited resources, working to bring deep collections into community engagement? What roles are deep collections and their individual objects playing in this new museum and new Oceania moment in the space between communities, curators, and museums as central cultural institutions. This thesis documents that though new practices of community engagement are emerging within the regions' museums, they remain at the exhibitionary level and rarely reach the deep collections. This thesis argues that a shift in practices will have real implications for museums, objects, and communities.

PREFACE

This project started with an object that could comfortably sit within the palm of your hand. It lives at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. Out of all the objects housed there, if I were given the chance to claim one for my own, this small Kauri Heart would be it— a warm amber color which has small fissures that run through it like dark seams, nestled inside a blue plush box.

This heart is made from the gum of the Kauri tree, and according to the manuscript records was made by the “Natives of Province of New Zealand” and was owned by Mrs. William Lincoln Balch in the late 19th Century. It was originally given to The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York by Mrs. Balch and was then transferred to the American Museum of Natural History in 1920. This heart was purchased as a wedding present for Mrs. Balch, and included in the archives is a copy of the original card that accompanied the heart and box. It was in this card that the writer explained the Kauri heart was an emblem of love and purity. Perhaps this object was made expressly for one of the many foreigners interested in acquiring ‘native’ objects. It is not difficult to imagine why a heart shaped out of Kauri gum would be appealing as a wedding gift.

This Kauri heart and its box struck me as different from many of the other objects housed in the museum. No one makes any claim to it, and no visiting scholars who have ever come to the museum has asked to see it; yet my own experience reveals it is capable of producing an exquisite reaction and human relation, of being revealed as an important museum object. As I began talking about it more to the Pacific curator, it became an object that was consistently shown on back of house collection tours. And two years ago, for the first time since entering the

museum it was put on display. Seeing the progression from a small overlooked object, to a piece proudly on display made me realize just how many other stories there were like this one or that could be if someone took the time to research a relatively hidden object and bring it out into the light, to warm it up so to speak. It was this experience that drove me to ask what other objects, located in what I am calling the “deep collections” might share a similar potential for meaningful engagement for “warming up,” if only they are given the attention they deserve.

INTRODUCTION

When thinking of museums, the objects that populate them are typically the first things that come to mind. While some of these objects are on display, the vast majority are kept in the back of the house where they are rarely, if ever, displayed. After acquisition, it is primarily through objects' exhibitions that museums actively engage in representation and meaning making. In recent years, there has been an increased opportunity for community members, from both service and source communities, to become more involved with these institutions in their operations. However, museums remain complex institutions with large numbers of invisible objects that have not been subject to changing practices of engagement. Though many of these objects are hidden in the deep collections, they still have the opportunity to interact with museum staff and community members and create relationships. Some of the strongest relationships are those found between objects and source communities, and between object and museum staff. This project will explore these material relationships, including relationships between community groups, the museums, and the objects themselves. This thesis explores and documents these material relationships, including relationships among community groups, the museums and their experts, and the objects themselves. On this basis of my findings, I argue that there is a class of objects which I term the "deep collections" that has been, if not completely overlooked, significantly underrepresented in scholarly analysis and critique, in institutional practice, and which remain nearly invisible to community members, hence unavailable for some of the kinds of engagements we now see emerging between our Oceanic communities, museums, and their collections.

A key influencing factor in mediating material relationships, the museum setting offers a space to explore how these three groups come together or do not around deep collections in the shadows. That the museum *space* contrasts with the *places* these objects originated adds to their meaning and their biographies (Gegeo 2001). Thus, it is in the museum, as a space occupied by objects, that the relationships between museum staff and source communities must be navigated to interact with objects, and the specific histories of each of these institutions must be considered within that navigation. While source communities may have had extensive interactions with their objects prior to their arrival in the museum, most of objects have not been engaged with since they were accessioned. If anything, contemporary source communities may have only heard stories about objects, or seen similar examples, because they have been cut off from the physical objects after they were collected. In contrast, many museum staff have not had access to the community stories and memories of objects prior to their arrival in the museum space. These two distinct perspectives naturally view the same objects differently. Nevertheless, both museum staff and source community members care deeply about the objects in their collections, though in potentially different ways, this can bring them together in moments of reconciliation around objects. Moreover, for deep collections, museum staff and community members may share a relative distance to these back room cabinets, closets, shelves, and objects as compared to highly visible front and center collections.

Interactions between people and objects in the museum often end with the visitor's gaze due to many museum policies that keep objects guarded or 'protected' behind glass. Those with the most access to objects are the museum staff members who handle them with gloves in often sterile labs or collections spaces. These rooms, clinical settings often reminiscent of a hospital, can be dulling to a wider sensory experience of engaging with an object. When source

communities have the ability to interact with their objects within museums, the context and possible content—ontology for lack of a better word—of the objects may be intensely transformed for the museum staff and community members.

This was my experience after seeing Māori and Samoan men and women engage with objects from their respective cultures within the American Museum of Natural History's back of house collections. A few years ago, I had the privilege to participate in the repatriation of Māori toi moko from the AMNH to Te Papa Tongarewa in Aotearoa. The final ceremonies in New York were filled with emotion, as an elderly Māori woman performed a wailing cry and the delegation from Te Papa hongied with the toi moko to warm them with their breath, as they spent so many years in the museum cold. The Māori elder who initiated the greetings with the toi moko went on to communicate with them and learn their names while explaining why they were being packed away into boxes for their journey home to Aotearoa. This event was the first time I realized that objects could be so much more than what they appear from their physical description. Though I cared for the objects in our Pacific collection, and spent time researching them to learn as much as I could, because I was not from Oceania, my understanding of these objects was limited to my own experiences with objects. For me it marked the point where my entire perspective of objects, be they Oceanic or from somewhere else, shifted. It may never have happened if I had not witnessed that interaction between the Te Papa delegates and these toi moko, which showed me just how important it is for indigenous people to have access to their objects within a museum context.

Highly emotional interactions brought these objects to life in my eyes, and I began seeing them within their broader cultural context. It was also through witnessing community interactions that I realized these objects were more than just examples of exquisite

craftsmanship, they were saturated with deep, often complex, meaning. Through community interactions, objects that were once considered lifeless came alive. In “Speaking for Herself? Hinemihi and Her Discourse” Eilean Hooper Greenhill states that “it seems likely that objects are made meaningful according to how they are placed within relations of significance, and that these relationships depend on who is determining what counts as significant” (2000: 50). It is generally agreed that museums play a significant role in the creation of an object’s identity, and are specific spaces that can alter an object’s meaning, but the interactions that happen within them are equally important in contributing to that meaning.

Due to museums’ influential nature, as well as the fact that many culturally significant objects now reside within them and are absent from the lives of source communities, they are extraordinarily important spaces for mediating cultural traditions in the contemporary moment. However due to such institutions’ colonial and imperial pasts, many people do not feel comfortable within the museum setting. This may be especially true because of fraught and complicated collection, acquisition, and accession practices throughout the museum’s existence (Thomas 1991 and Jolly 2011). While acknowledging that these painful histories is important, museums should not be confined to them and need to move past them. Throughout Oceania many institutions are attempting to do this in several different ways with the most notable being the transition of their institutionality towards a cultural center model (Message 2000).

This project begins with the insight that scholarly attention has been primarily devoted to museum exhibitions (front and center collections) while deep collections have been neglected. This work documents that despite scant scholarly attention, within deep collections there are important moments of engagement and relationships being created between museum staff, source and service community members, and the objects themselves and immense potential for even

deeper engagements. Finally, it argues that through the objects themselves and their phenomenological relationships to the previously mentioned groups, that these relationships can be carefully explored.

There are any number of objects through which these relationships can be engaged, but this project will focus on exemplary “deep collections” in New York at The American Museum of Natural History, Hawai`i at The Bishop Museum, and finally in Aotearoa at Te Papa Tongarewa. Among the most well-known regional and extra-regional institutions with vast Pasifika collections, these three institutions are notable for the size of their collections and their desires to work with community members. Of the three featured institutions, only Te Papa Tongarewa is attempting to implement a cultural center model; the other two museums follow a more traditional operation. I worked with the Pacific and Pacific entangled collections in each of these institutions that have both indigenous and non-indigenous museum staff working regularly with the objects.

If museum staff and source communities ascribe to the ideas that objects have their own lives, biographies, mana, warmth, the ability to initiate communication, and can draw people to them and elicit emotions from them, then objects need to be seen as equal partners in the previously mentioned relationships. While most objects were not intended by their creators to live in museums, these are the *spaces* where they have come to presently reside. Though relationships are most visible when all three groups are interacting together, objects that are not visited or frequently viewed by anyone still maintain their life or mana, power and agency. Perhaps it will come into visibility sometime in the future. Perhaps people will have emotional reunions with them in the future. When thinking about the future of objects, particularly with regards to Oceanic communities, the possibility of repatriation is always a critical context and

must be also be considered within these relationships. As well, the places where these museums are located affect the way objects are perceived and how their meanings can vary across communities of engagement. For objects, museums are *spaces*, but they are also located within specific *places* which is key to considering the *space/place* dichotomy previously mentioned (Gegeo 2001). Though there are various levels of object meaning, this work seeks not to privilege some over others and to acknowledge the multiplicity of meanings and identities an object can hold (Hooper-Greenhill 2000).

This thesis argues that if Oceania and oceanic-object entangled institutions are to successfully maintain and possibly improve on the museum model (as opposed to the culture center model), in a new Oceania and new museum era, then significant steps need to be taken along paths that are literally being created as we speak in some of the region's largest collections. These steps include attending to the value and heightened meaningfulness of every day and "humble" objects (Gormley 2016). As well as creating practical possibilities for community members and not only academics, to regularly interact with deep collections, and the active recognition by museum staff that objects have multiple meanings, some of which can only be understood through interactions with their source communities. This research documents how Oceanic objects engage in relationships between museum staff, descendent communities, and each other within deep collections. Museums are the spaces that most commonly facilitate and participate in these relationships, which make them equally important to consider. With this thesis, I attempt to understand how museums can change the atmosphere around the objects that they house, and how objects can be used to change how museums operate, specifically in regards to relationships with source communities.

I would like to take a moment to further discuss decolonization as it relates to this work. Far too often this popular debate remains solely in the realm of the theoretical and is only ever used as a popular metaphor. However, Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2012) provide a helpful reminder of what decolonization, in a settler colonial context, can mean. Though this context cannot be applied everywhere and to all groups and experiences, it is a useful starting point. Tuck and Yang explain, “decolonization in a settler context is fraught because empire, settlement, and internal colony have no spatial separation. Each of these features of settler colonialism in the US context...make it a site of contradictory decolonial desires. Decolonization as metaphor allows people to equivocate these contradictory decolonial desires because it turns decolonization into an empty signifier to be filled by any track towards liberation” (2012: 7). By acknowledging the history of colonization in museums and the physical land that they inhabit, the argument for decolonizing is always present, strikingly in the field of Pacific Islands Studies. One way authors suggest decolonizing their work is through methodologies, such as Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) who views the word ‘research’ as a dirty word for indigenous people and finds the term ‘indigenous’ itself problematic. These indigenous methodologies are described as approaching “cultural protocols, values and behaviours as an integral part of methodology” (Tuhiwai Smith: 1999: 15). Another suggestion she makes, that is echoed by anthropologist Ty Kawika Tengan (2005), is the importance of having honest dialogue with the community you are working in, as well as repeatedly coming back to that specific community with your work because there needs to be responsibility in conducting what traditional Western academics would call fieldwork.

For myself I find these practical examples of how to do research in the field of Pacific Island studies extremely helpful. However, I am unsure whether they are tools of decolonization

or something else. When conducting research that aims to understand a community, it is integral to try and understand how they see it, not just through a Western lens. I think that when we use the term “decolonize” there are other issues being raised simultaneously. Almost across the board people are referring to the colonization carried out by white American and European foreigners on the islands, but as Vilsoni Hereniko points out through the writings of Epeli Hau’ofa and Albert Wendt, the new leaders in the Pacific Islands today are in some cases just as corrupt as the foreign colonial governments of the past. Hereniko quotes Wendt in saying, “Our new leadership, our new elite—of which I am a member, I am sorry to say—is carrying out a form of colonialism which may even be worse than what we got rid of” (1994: 3). If we believe this as true, which I do, then it is not only a problem of decolonizing in a traditional sense that needs to occur in Pacific Island studies but also something more attuned to the current internal power dynamics that needs to be addressed as well.

There is a quote from Caribbean-American Audre Lorde that comes to mind whenever the question of decolonization is raised. Lorde once wrote, “For the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house. They may allow us to temporarily beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change” (1984: 2). This is quote that I both love and disagree with from time to time. I think the so-called “master’s tools” can be powerful weapons and when used the correct way and in tandem with other weapons, in this case perhaps Pacific Islander knowledge and ways of knowing, can indeed dismantle the master’s house.

I was reminded by my committee chair that we should not so readily accept that these “tools” ever really did belong to the masters. Every culture and all people around the world have been involved in the production of their own tools. Likewise, when contact between people have occurred and tools have been introduced in new cultures over time they have become integrated,

and sometimes changed, by that culture. In some cases, there exists the possibility that tools have been improved on the models from their initial creators. With this in mind, I argue that tools in their conceptual form, whether physical or theoretical, should belong to no one. We should all be working to add as many of these “tools” into our own toolboxes, so that we will be prepared to handle any situation. Thus, where Lorde addresses the need to dismantle the “master’s house” or when scholars address the need to decolonize the museum (Lonetree 2009) or academia in general (Tuhiwai Smith 1999 and Tengan 2005) every tool, regardless of its origin, that could be useful should be utilized. That is how we decolonize, and that is how we destroy the “master’s house.”

Decolonizing has been discussed extensively; yet in many ways it feels we are no closer to achieving that goal. Therefore, I would like to propose something different. There is saying in AAE (African-American English) that has gained recent popularity that I think the field of Pacific Island studies needs to embrace: to ‘Stay Woke.’ The decolonizing has, I think, outgrown its usefulness as people are aware of its implications largely thanks to the work of Epeli Hau’ofa (2008), what we now need is to keep people awake and to wake up others. I find it hard to believe that any Pacific Islanders would enter the fields of academia and believe the stereotypes they encounter; something deep inside of them, inside of all of us, is repulsed when these stereotypes are invoked or when certain historical figures, such as James Cook, are mentioned. The decolonizing stage needs to be moved past, if we get stuck there we will never move forward. What needs to happen now is what I would like to call ‘wokeness.’

This needs to occur on every level of life. In the academy, yes of course, but outside of it as well. This includes in our families, at our jobs, and whenever people return to their motherland and home communities. There are ‘woke’ people everywhere. The battle now is

staying that way and calling out colonial crap wherever and whenever it rears its head. Academia is a Western tradition, that fact cannot be denied and it is unfair to require us to forget its origins. If we forget or deny them, then we are essentially falling back asleep. Academics who ‘stay woke’ are so important to the academy, not only for their students but also for their peers. Pacific Islanders are not the first people to feel personally and collectively hurt by museums and academia with their imperial and colonial pasts. They will also, unfortunately, not likely be the last. It is time now that all those who have been slighted by this beast with many heads to stay vigilant of any attempts made to repeat the same mistakes. Prejudices and negative stereotypes are not new; they are not colonial constructs but human constructs found wherever humans live. They can only be defeated by “woke” individuals who see them for what they are and alert others to their presence.

In the first chapter I show how museums and the practice of collecting grew out of Europe to eventually spread across the globe. Though much of the scholarship on the creation of the museum is fixated on exhibitionary practices, and I am interested in deep collections, this history must be understood first. I then go on to discuss the new museology moment we have entered where museums are rethinking their pasts as well as their contemporary practices. It is from this moment that two models, the cultural center and the dialogic museum, have emerged.

The second chapter shifts focus from the museum as a stand-alone institution to the internal practices of institutions as engaged and entangled in local and regional communities. I begin with a discussion of the popular terms used with museums and material culture study, and follow that with a brief cataloguing of the various ways objects can be classified. I then transition from classification systems to the diverse ways objects can be, and have been, interpreted by people. Finally, this chapter concludes with the two integral points of my thesis: access and

agency. By asking questions of who has access to objects and what that looks like, I engage with this popular issue. Agency is centered around the thought that objects both have and act on their own agency to influence themselves and those around them.

The final chapter of this thesis turns to the three institutions I elected to feature: The American Museum of Natural History (New York), The Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum (Hawai`i), and Te Papa Tongarewa The National Museum of New Zealand (Wellington). After a brief introduction to each of these museums, and the specific collections I have highlighted, I begin an in-depth analysis of what museum staff at each institution shared. This information, gathered from in-depth interviews and observation, is organized according to the key topics explored in the previous chapter. I return to the terminology debate to show how each institution selects their preferred language and why. Similarly, I discuss how museum staff interpret and view agency within the museum and how they handle access to their collections. I highlight the use of back of house tours across all three institutions before introducing specific projects each museum has created to facilitate access. In Chapters Two and Three, there are a number of lengthy interview quotes. I left these intact because I wanted their voices to speak for themselves, just as I want objects to speak for themselves. Together, all three chapters carve out an argument that deep collections deserve more scholarly and institutional attention. This work strongly suggests that there is a great deal of potential and need for institutions and communities to work together to excavate and reframe or (re)establish relations to and around these deep collections.

CHAPTER ONE: FROM THE OUTSIDE

While the scholarship on museums is extensive and the history long, there are still parts of the museum that have long been neglected. These areas, or what I label “deep collections,” were and still are, the foundations for many museums, as they comprise the majority of a museum’s objects. Though geographically distant from Europe, Oceania has long held a place in the minds of Europeans, ever since the arrival of the first explorers and with this contact came collecting. Scientific voyages often had a mandate to collect examples of the regions’ flora, fauna, and images of the lands and inhabitants (Smith 1950). Many sailors engaged in their own personal collecting to bring unique souvenirs home from their travels abroad (Smith 1950). Many of these collections found their way into European museums and into these institutions’ deep collections. Thus, I begin this chapter with the museum in Europe because the institutions now residing in Oceania highlight in this thesis are rooted in this deeper museum history and practice.

After laying the groundwork for how collecting began and how the museum was created, I introduce the current trend in museology. This new museology moment (Message 2009), has introduced two distinct institutional designs, which have been intended to “fix” the problems of the more traditional museum. It is through the dialogic museum (with its inquiry approach where the collections are designed for exhibition and public programming needs) and cultural center models (that allows for cultural specificity in all levels of operation) that many are looking to see the future of museums. However, only one of the three institutions I am featuring had adopted one of these models, Te Papa Tongarewa has attempted to emulate a cultural center. The other two institutions follow the traditional museum model, laid out in the beginning sections of this

chapter. I argue that while these two new museum models are useful, for museums being created, now already established museums are still relevant in this moment and into the future. Before I discuss how they maintain their relevance, an understanding of the roots for these different styles, cultural center, and dialogic and traditional museums, is needed first.

An Overview of Collecting

It is important to remember that this history of collecting is incredibly euro-centric. However, collecting as a practice is not limited to Europeans. Simply the fact that collections exist throughout Oceania demonstrates its importance to the region. Even if the most well-known collections, like the ones housed in my three highlighted institutions, were begun by Europeans, they have been continued by non-Europeans. Collecting has deep roots within the islands of Oceania, and they have contributed to our understanding of the practice that has not received the attention it deserves. It was this human desire to collect that led to the eventual creation of the museum as we recognize it today.

The tradition of the museum, as we are familiar with it today, began in Europe with the rise of the scholar during the Renaissance (Pomian 1990). The rise of the scholar was followed by a growth in the popularity of Western collecting and collectors, yet the practice of collecting objects predates museums. Though there is a distinct connection between these two concepts, collecting as its own practice deserves attention (Pomian 1990).

In his work *Collectors and Curiosities: Paris and Venice, 1500-1800* Krzysztof Pomian explores collecting as an anthropological event and traces its history from the first recognized (Western) collectors at the Grotte de l'Hyène at Arcy-sur-Cure in France to the present. These collections are distinct because of the way they exhibit the relationship between the visible and

invisible worlds, thus the inhabitants of the Grotte were the first to set aside specific objects that represented the invisible. A connection also exists between collections and social hierarchy, “it is the social hierarchy which necessarily leads to the birth of collections, those sets of objects kept out of the economic circuit, afforded special protection and put on display” (Pomian 1990: 32). Within the distinct realms of a social hierarchy, it was those at the highest levels who had the privilege of owning collections, and thus, this justification was used to explain their dominance over the ‘lower’ social ranks. With this connection to social hierarchy came the issue of access: who had access to them and who should have the right to them? It is these two issues that I am primarily concerned in my work on collections that will be further explained throughout the remainder of this thesis. From the earliest beginnings at the Grotte to the collections found in the three institutions I am highlighting within this thesis, collections have grown and changed over time and will likely continue into the future. Before proceeding further, I would like to touch on Pomian’s definition of a collection. He states, “the chief distinguishing feature of a collection is the fact that the objects of which it is comprised are kept either temporarily or permanently out of the circuit of utilitarian activities...a set of objects must also be afforded special protection...The formation of a collection thus requires solutions to be found to the problems of preservation and possibly of the restoration of the pieces composing it” (Pomian 1990: 260).

He goes on to explain that another distinguishing feature of a collection is the fact that a collection is displayed in a specific exhibition space, as opposed to various objects that are left in dusty attics and basements. It is through the process of being exhibited that the collection becomes a part of a “non-utilitarian exchanges where the value attributed to it by its owner is confirmed or invalidated by people other than him” (Pomian 1990: 260). I largely agree with the defining characteristics provided by Pomian, but I must question the emphasis he places on a

collection's display. Though one could argue that display equals access, the significant portions of collections that never 'see the light of day' largely outnumber the few pieces privileged with that position. As the title of his book suggests, the collections specifically discussed by Pomian are limited to those existing within France and Italy at a specific time, though it can be argued that the collections from this part of the world have heavily influenced collections worldwide, including those I am highlighting. He closes his work by stating, "any discussion of collections must touch on political, economic, and social problems.... the collections of a given country at a given time are, taken as a whole, the coextension of that country's culture at that particular time. They incarnate this culture and make it visible to us." (Pomian 1990: 275). While many may think of museum collections as existing solely within the museum walls, they can also be read as reflections of the society where they are based, but I would include that an objects place of origin should be considered with at least equal importance.

Rose Evan discusses the act of collections and the role of collecting in people's lives as individuals in her piece "Constructing Identity: Collecting Oceanic Art and Artefacts in New Zealand" in *Repositioning Pacific Arts: Artists, Objects, Histories*. She states, "the way individuals choose to obtain, preserve, value and exchange specific materials relates to their notion of a communal reality and, therefore, helps them define who they are in the modern world" (Allen and Waite 2014:121). According to Evans, the act of collecting is deeply tied to the collector's identity. She defines a collection as being "made up of separate parts and diverse objects that have been selected to construct a unified and single entity" (Evans in Allen and Waite 2014: 121). While museums often divide this "single collection entity" into geographic areas, aiming to represent the area as fully as possible, personal collections existing outside of museums tend to be different. Museum displays are largely organized around a specific theme,

private collections are often centered around the desires of the collector. For many individual collectors, past and present, their collecting is based on their likes, dislikes, and interests. Something about certain objects draws their attention while other objects do not. Thus, a Western collection can be considered “what is chosen, preserved and exchanged in society, historically, provides a scale of significance and meaning to objects within a system of symbols and values” (Evans in Allen and Waite 2014: 121). The connection between identity, a collector, and their collection can become overshadowed upon entering a museum. This is because collections housed and owned by museums today are primarily made up of the personal collections of many individuals who sold, donated, or gifted them to museums either themselves or through their descendants. Thus, museums are collections of collections and much of the collecting they conduct as institutions is centered around ‘filling the gaps’ in their collection.

There have been various trends in collecting since the collectors of the Grotte (Pomian 1990) first began trying to collect the invisible. It was at the end of the 15th century that collections of antiquities came into popularity, at the same that the humanist scholars came to prominence in Europe. This trend for collecting pieces that were considered ‘antiquities’ continued into the late 16th century. These antiquities included ancient manuscripts, specifically those that challenged the popular religious beliefs of the times and had previously been ignored and considered relatively unimportant (Pomian 1990). With the increase of travel came an expanding of collections beyond manuscripts to include ‘exotic’ pieces from places previously believed to be inaccessible. These pieces were largely collected not for their representation of the invisible, as the earliest examples of collections were, but instead for their representations of these far-off places and people, thus ushering in a new trend in collection curios, during the 16th and 17th centuries.

Nicholas Thomas describes the collecting of these curios in Oceania in his work *Entangled Objects*, “the literature of the famous late eighteenth-century voyages of exploration is suffused with the notion of curiosity, both as a subjective attitude and as an attribute of things noticed. An attempt to map European interests in artifacts in the period could thus take seriously the idea that a collection of curiosities in some sense stood as an objectification of the culturally and historically specific form of intellectual and experiential desire, which ‘curiosity’ alluded to” (1991: 127). While the collection of antiquities and curios was gaining popularity, there were two other types of objects that also became sought after by collectors. These consisted of contemporary works of art, which were not considered to be of particular importance prior to the 15th century, and objects of scientific inquiry that did not arrive on the collecting scene until the 17th century (Pomian 1990). In the case of collecting Hawaiian objects, Neller explains, “Europeans were appropriating Hawaiian objects at the same time that Hawaiians were appropriating Western objects. Hawaiian artefacts were transformed from traditional objects to ‘curios’, and the values and practices that created the object were alienated” (2002: 128). While much of the work on collecting has focused on Europeans collecting things from ‘exotic’ places, Neller’s work shows that collecting does not just happen in one direction, but can and does occur simultaneously between groups.

As collecting and collectors became better known, there came to be a differentiation made between them and accumulators. Though similar, these are two distinct individuals in the eyes of Frederick Baekeland, who discussed this distinction in his piece “Psychological Aspects of Art Collecting”. Baekeland states, “while the accumulator passively and uncritically amasses a motley assortment of things that pass his way, the collector actively seeks out only certain kinds of objects in which he is interested” (1994: 205). For the collector, there is a drive of passion that

cannot always be explained. It is this drive that draws people to certain objects, whether it is passion or attachment or something else entirely. Baekeland goes on to further differentiate between the collector and the art lover who does not share the same drive to own pieces like the collector does. Instead for the art lover, the ability to simply view art is enough; there is no need for possession.

This desire for collecting is present in children as well as adults, though among adults it is interesting to note that many art collectors are men. For these men “they report that they usually know immediately whether or not a piece really appeals to them and whether they want to possess it. They often compare their feelings of longing for it to sexual desire” (Baekeland 1994: 211). This component of sexual desire and the traditionally gendered nature of collecting is intriguing though I will not be focusing on this aspect of collecting. Baekeland also found that collectors have a desire to leave a legacy through their collections, “to obtain immortality through leaving their intact collections, bearing their names, to famous museums seems to have been a major motive for many collectors” (1994: 217). Due to the large number of male collectors, it is unsurprising that men donated many of the objects found in museum’s collections, and their motives, sexual or otherwise, are important. In the collecting of Oceanic objects by colonizers, these collectors aimed to understand and categorize the people they encountered during their travel through acquiring certain objects (Bell 2009, Kaeppler 1978, Thomas 1991). It is from this collecting practice and the display of collections that museums emerged and they continue to operate in this vein in some ways despite real shifts in institutional practices.

The History of Museums

Similarly, to the heavily euro-centric history of collecting, museums, as we know them today, were born in Europe. This place of origin has hardly stopped them from rapidly spreading around the world. It is from this lineage that the American Museum of Natural History, the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum, and the predecessors of Te Papa Tongarewa descend. Thus, before these museums can be understood as they function today, their pasts must be made visible. It is through acknowledging these histories that museums can begin to enter the new moment being experienced in museology, a moment that not only encourages, but requires an admission of its history.

There has been much research done on the history of museums, their creation, and their collections, even during the earliest stages of their creation, they were being discussed. Eva Schulz documented these early stages for the predecessors of the modern museum from the 16th to the 18th centuries in Europe. For instance, in the 1700s, a man writing under the pseudonym C.F. Neikeliuss created a handbook or set of guidelines for museums. Neikeliuss noted “the difference between original works of art and imitations is emphasized and collectors are encouraged to collect only high-quality originals. This estimation of art presupposes that it is regarded as an original product of the human mind. Created by man, it can also be evaluated and judged by man. Man has this ability since he studies and educates himself” (Schulz: 1994: 184). In his work Neikeliuss goes on to detail the ideal layout of an ideal collection, ‘south-easterly’, and how the air should circulate around the room, though he did not provide an explanation as to why this direction, along with his other recommendations were, ideal.

Before exploring the objects that compromise museum collections more deeply, I would like to take some time to discuss the creation of the museum as we are familiar with it today. The

private collections of the elite classes of society were largely inaccessible to the general populous. It was the desire for access to these private collections that they could not personally own, that pressured the formation of societal institutions of museums and libraries. Unlike private collections, museums “can be seen as one of those institutions whose role is to form a consensus of opinion around the technique of opposing the visible and the invisible, which began to take shape towards the end of the fourteenth century, and consequently around new social hierarchies, where a place at the top required the enjoyment of a privileged relationship with the invisible in its new definition” (Pomian 1990: 43). This new social hierarchy that museums have reinforced throughout their existence has been explored in detail in the work of Pomian (1990) and Bennett (1995). The birth of the modern museum must be viewed in the broader context of how culture became a governing tool and form of power for the societal elites. In his work *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, and Politics* Bennett argues that culture was used as a resource to teach the lower classes acceptable societal norms, and the museum became one of the spaces that attempted to do this. The distinction between museums and private collections can also be seen in the permanence of museums as opposed to the private collections that are typically dispersed after the death of their owners. It is through this transition that many private collections end up being absorbed into museum collections, as they offer the collector a chance to keep their collections together, though they can be accessed by a much larger audience.

Thus, far I have been discussing museums in a general sense, however there is significant diversity within the different types of museums that exist. Two of the most common types of museums are natural history museums and art museums, and though they share similar characteristics they remain distinct. Pomian (1990) discusses four distinct patterns of public museums: traditional, revolutionary, evergetic, and commercial. The traditional pattern applies to

institutions that began to accumulate collections through their daily practices that can be viewed by those outside of the institution. For examples churches that have acquired works of art over time. The second pattern, the revolutionary, “were founded by decree, absorbed works from extremely diverse origins seized by the state from the homes of their former owners, and were housed in buildings completely unconnected with these work” (Pomian 1990: 263). This type is perfectly exemplified by the creation of the Louvre due to the French Revolution, where works previously housed in princely collections were placed in control of the state and ‘public’ ownership (Bennett 1995). Miriam Kahn maps out the history of the museum according to the most popular trends from specific centuries. The 16th and 17th centuries featured the popular and well-known cabinets of curiosities, that were created due to the popularity of travelling. In the 18th and 19th centuries, museums became places for collecting and exhibiting their spoils of war. The late 19th and early 20th centuries were characterized by the prevalence of world fairs and similar international expositions, where museums were used to justify and exhibit “racial exploration at home and the creation of an empire abroad” (Kahn 1995: 324). It is clear from their creation that museums have always been political and will likely always remain that way. From the princely collections, that were often used to impress visiting figures of importance, to the public museums that grew from these collections, cast the state in its own positive light (Duncan 1991). Their political history and nature have heavily influenced the museums that we see today.

Museums that follow the third evergetic pattern consist of private collections left to towns, states, or other educational or religious institutions by their collectors, I hesitate to use the term owner particularly considering collections containing Oceanic objects that may or may not be ‘owned’ by those who acquired them, which I will discuss in Chapter Three. Most evergetic

museums came into existence around the turn of the 20th century. It is interesting to note that these museums had a much larger popularity in the United States than in Europe likely because they were considered “the creations of industrialists, tradesmen and financiers who owed their prosperity to the current economic expansion, and who used part of their time and money to set up collections and arrange for these to be taken care of after their deaths” (Pomian 1990: 265). Examples of this type of museum include the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The final pattern, the commercial, reflects an institution that intentionally purchases a collection or individual pieces in their entirety for the purposes of filling their museums immediately. The best example of the commercial museum is reflected in the well-known British Museum, that began with their collection purchase in 1753 from the late Sir Hans Sloane (Pomian 1990).

While these institutions remain distinct, largely from their different beginnings, objects move with some freedom between museums of these different patterns and types. Pomian points out this unique capacity for objects “although the four patterns of public museum formation encompass the legal, political and socio-economic aspects of the relationship between public museums and private collections, they take no account of the objects which move from the latter to the former. ... we can see that the relationship between these twin public and private poles which have coexisted throughout modern times, seems to consist of a permanent tension between a certain conservatism on one side and attempts at innovation on the other” (1990: 274). It is the objects that I am primarily concerned with, but they cannot be explored for my purposes outside of the museums that they now reside in. The connection between private collections and museums is clearly very strong and deeply rooted in history; yet it continues to be of importance

to contemporary collection practices. In fact, after being absorbed into a museum, collections often retain the names of those who donated or initially collected them.

Bennett discusses three key issues faced by museums that fit Pomian's revolutionary pattern during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The first was the changing shape of social and museum spaces into the public sphere that highlighted middle class, bourgeois values as opposed to their previous connection with high culture and the upper class that existed during the prominence of private princely collections. In this new public space, the general population could be instructed in acceptable social behaviors as well as educated with the specific intent of civilizing the lower classes. Though intended to bring about a sense of equality between the classes and the public ownership of pieces previously owned by princes and other social elites, these new museums spaces, particularly art museums, were swiftly hijacked by those social elites to reinforce the differences between themselves and the general public. So even though the pieces of art and other displayed objects became public, the knowledge and the power was largely still in the hands of those who previously owned the collections. The second issue faced by the museum was a reorganization of how they exhibited their collections, which Bennet highlights as both epistemic and governmental. As collections became public, the objects within them took on new meanings, but these new meanings could only be 'seen' by those privy to "the appropriate socially-coded ways of seeing" (Bennet 1995:35). However, museums, and the individuals and governments using them, were more interested in teaching the public how to behave within these spaces than how to 'see' them and the collections within them in this other manner. Finally, the third issue follows from a concern for public control and regulation within the museum, specifically through architectural means. Here Bennet makes connections between the layout of department stores and arcades with how museums exhibitionary architecture came

into being. Within these practices not only is the space laid out for visitors to view the art, which is on display, but visitors are also encouraged to view each other, as an additional form of social self-monitoring control.

With the emergence of the museum also came the development of a multiplicity of new academic disciplines and their own forms of representation and exhibition. In making collections visible, the objects become layered with various meanings of power, “the power to command and arrange things and bodies for public display– they sought to allow the people, and *en masse* rather than individually, to know rather than be known, to become the subjects rather than the objects of knowledge” (Bennett 1995: 63). This ability, for visitors to be known, and regulated, was largely tied to the architecture of the exhibitionary complex and the tendency society has towards spectacle. With spectacle came a fear of the public becoming uncontrolled in the museum setting, so the need to further control the behaviors of the public, particularly within the museum space came into question. Architects competed in the late 18th and early 19th centuries to design state-sponsored museums, just as they still do today, not only to display the objects but to also control and display the public, as the museum became a public space and not just a place for the societal elites. Public control did not stop with architecture, but some museums went so far as to provide instructional pamphlets to their visitors on how they should behave within the museum which included their dress. These guidelines were specifically tailored to the working classes. Finally, Bennett highlights in this chapter the importance of anthropology specifically because it allowed museum to portray for the public the difference between Western civilizations and people and the often, incorrectly, named primitive peoples. It was the Western people, and those visiting the museums, who found themselves at the pinnacle of the pyramid of human progress.

The museum's power and construction of knowledge came from its ability to reconstruct within its walls a hierarchy of society and things. Though the ideologies put forward by the museum are deeply rooted within the period of the late 18th and early 19th century, Bennett is not hesitant to critique the racist and sexist ideologies museums of the past put forward. This is important because these ideologies still cast lingering shadows on the modern museums of today. These ideologies were meant to shape the museum's visitors in an effort to educate the public, but only to a certain extent. Here again Bennett repeats the museum's desire to educate the public on how to behave within a public space. Moving past this relationship between the displayed collections and the visitors, Bennett notes that we should also be considering who takes part in deciding what to display and what exactly gets shown.

A reoccurring theme in Bennett's work is the issue of accessibility, which will be further discussed in the following chapter. This ranges from the changing accessibility of the collections now housed in museums from their beginnings as princely collections. With the creation of the public museum, these objects went from being viewed by only one person to being viewed by the masses. Thus, the objects became physically more accessible while they transitioned into new spaces. Simultaneously, visitors from various classes were more accessible to each other as well. This issue of accessibility presented a need for visitors to be taught how to behave in the presence of these objects, accustomed to being only in the presence of the elites, and was sometimes handled with the distribution of the previously mentioned pamphlets. These prescribed behaviors can still be found in the ways that visitors behave upon entering museums today. Large boisterous tour groups quickly become subdued and thoughtful, at least in their outward appearance. Many of these behaviors are similar to how people behave within sites of worship, so it is unsurprising to see the connection between reverence before an altar and before

the displayed objects in a gallery. The architecture of the museum also facilitates this accessibility by limiting the number of people capable of viewing a piece of work at the same time, while at the same time artfully displaying the large crowds themselves. The display of the crowds themselves can be seen when the visitors step back long enough to see how they are just as much a part of the exhibition as the pieces mounted on stands and hung on walls.

This question of accessibility also applies to the ability of visitors to recognize the layers in what they are seeing and understanding the museum ideologies at play. This form of accessibility is largely tied to education. It is only when the public is educated to understand the structures of the museum and its often-hidden ideologies that the museum becomes accessible. If visitors can reach a point where they understand what they are seeing, or as Bennett describes it, are able to ‘see through’ the objects then they are more likely to identify with the Western culture, held as pinnacle of human achievement in both the sciences and the arts. However as more and more scholars are coming from previously marginalized communities, this question needs to be problematized. People are now able to have an education that permits them to ‘see through’ the museum and the objects within it, but they may not need to identify themselves with the highest pinnacle of human achievement in the museums eyes. Thankfully museums are becoming more reflexive in their past ideologies and problems that they have faced, particularly in the initially anthropologically and biologically based racial hierarchy. The problematic language of the past, in particular the term ‘primitive’ is something that needs to be addressed in this reflexive moment and hopefully changed, if it is not already being addressed.

Bennett rightly points out that the many changes the museum has gone through from its early beginning of princely collections to the cultural centers gaining popularity now, has been a very gradual process. Museums make institutional changes at a glacial pace, but change is

certainly possible and occurring. While the process has sometimes been quick, like in France with the Louvre, or slower, like in Great Britain, Germany, and later the United States, museums are still generally in the same place on the continuum of becoming more progressive at any given time. I am particularly interested in how the architecture of museum storerooms play into the various aspects of accessibility, and how objects are relegated to these store rooms and ultimately deep collections.

New Museology

This shift in museology has heavily influenced and will likely continue influencing, how museum staff operate within their respective institutions. This moment is of particular importance to Oceania. Not only has it coincided with a similarly community-focused moment for cultural scholars of the region, it is where many new institutions are being opened. Likewise, Te Papa Tongarewa is a leader, both in and outside of the region, known for successfully characterizing new museology.

In the last few decades, there has been a shift in museology where museums professionals and academics have begun addressing the complex histories and roles museums play in our society. This shift began in the 1970s when museums began to discuss the need for more community engagement because their past practices had finally been recognized as problematic and regulate change. Though this change was occurring in individual institutions, it was through the work of the International Council of Museums through their conferences and workshops that was “primarily concerned with ‘giving people control over their cultural heritage and its preservation as part of how they maintain, reinforce, or construct their identity’” (King 2015). At the same time, indigenous people began creating their own cultural centers that spoke against the

colonial narratives and representations of their people and themselves that were prominent in Western institutions. It was a desire for new more accurate representations of themselves that partially drove the creation of these cultural centers, and their presence challenged more traditional museums to address the same problems and questions. It is unsurprising that shift has occurred during this postcolonial moment in academia where indigenous knowledge has begun to be recognized by academics as equal to its Western counterparts. It is also important to consider the popular and often debated term of decolonization in relation to this new moment, as most museums were or still are colonial institutions. Museums of this age are challenged to “devise strategies of representation that do not reproduce colonial ways of organizing experience, but rather, reflect the representational strategies of those whose ‘culture’ is on display, in ways that remain meaningful to visitors not acquainted with the areas involved” (Fairweather 2004: 2-3). This moment in time is unique because for the first time in museum history, the ‘people’ on display are being allowed and encouraged to speak with their own voices in the academic world with that language. In cultural centers this is more easily facilitated as it is often the indigenous people themselves running the centers, but in more traditional Western museums, museum staff are working with and reaching out to source community members to address the same problems.

A key point within this discussion of new museology remains collaboration. It is not enough to ‘cite’ source communities within exhibits, they need to be actively involved and engaged in the changes museum staff are attempting to make. This inclusivity of groups, or constituencies, previously considered to be on the margins of a museums audience, is another significant change occurring as museums attempt to make themselves less elite. Despite these attempts, the relationships between museums and source communities remain “an unequal one,

with the balance of power heavily tipped in favour of the institution” (Bautista 2014: 25). Mark Busse highlights two key themes critically relevant to this shift in museology. The first is a rethinking of the idea ‘cultural property’, which he argues has become over used by both museums and source communities as an all-inclusive term to describe objects from a particular culture in a museum, that no longer has significance attached to it. His second theme is that “there is an opportunity to consider the benefits of alternative forms of curatorial practice...as alternative ways of interacting with objects and the people who have interests in them” (Busse 2008: 190). It is with this second theme that I am most interested for this project. Presently there is no set of ‘best practices’ being used across museums broadly to put this new museology into action. Instead each institution works with the communities or constituencies it has the most connections to, and attempts to make changes there first. These changes influence how museums work with communities they do not have connections too. Unfortunately, no one has these connections, and the various projects that come with them, with every source community represented within their collections. Even institutions that focus on particular regions of the world, like Oceania, have limited connections with the multitude of communities who call the Pacific Ocean home. For the time being, museums are attempting to discern what works best for themselves and the communities they most interact with, and from comparing these programs we can hope to piece together a set of practices that can work on a broader scale in museums across the world. This is the direction this new museology is heading, though we are still at the very beginning of this journey for significant institutional change.

Another significantly influencing factor in this new museology is our current digital age. While new digital technologies are offering unique ways to facilitate community engagement and collaboration with museums and new exhibitionary projects, they are also altering the

museum space. Susana Smith Bautista writes, “as museums became about experiences— ‘process over stasis’— they became less connected to place; objects became ‘vehicles for the delivery of experience rather than as ends unto themselves’” (2014: 10). This observation about the changing nature of objects in museums deserves a moment of attention. Museums have had to ask themselves if they need to retain their collections (and thus objects) to remain a museum. The generally agreed upon answer is no, as there are a number of museums that operate without collections, but for the many museums who still have collections and are actively collecting, Bautista’s point raises questions about how long objects will retain their importance as our world becomes more and more focused on the digital. It is likely within the realm of community engagement that the digital has been most embraced within the museum, “teachers can download lesson plans from websites, members can renew online, students and scholars can search online collection databases, mobile tours of exhibitions offer detailed information, and those more inclined to participate can comment on blogs and social media, upload photos, tag objects on the website, and play online games” (Bautista 2014: 15). Almost all major museums have apps and free wireless internet that can be used to navigate their spaces, interact with other visitors, and engage with the exhibitions all through their personal devices. By embracing these new technologies museums can “facilitate instantaneous communication from anywhere on the globe, inspires new museum experiences including user-generated content, crowd-curated exhibitions, personalized online collections, and social media-supported affinity and membership groups” (Bautista 2014: 28). Though museums have the ability to reach out all over the globe, the fact remains that establishing connections to source communities is not always as easy as a simple email. It needs to involve the building up of trust and rapport and continued respect and collaboration over time. A digital presence must be continually maintained for it to remain

relevant to the communities with which the museum is attempting to work (Din 2013). Thus, these new technologies are a helpful tool for museums to use, though they do not solve this problem entirely.

Within this new museology, a distinct Māori museology has also been created from within The National Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. Schorch et al. explains the intent behind this Māori museology in connection with the travelling exhibition of the Cook/Forster Collection from the George-August- University in Göttingen, Germany was through recontextualizing this exhibit in a more holistic and contemporary Oceania with an emphasis on relationships all based on the concept of mana taonga. Mana taonga is explained as recognizing the relationships found not only between people, but between objects and *mātauranga Māori* (knowledge) as well (Schorch et al. 2016). They explain, “we seek to do this by bringing the histories of encounter, and their impact upon Europe as materialized in the Cook/Forster Collections, into dialogue with the subsequent involvement of the Māori people in scientific enterprises across the Pacific and their ultimate reconnection with their *taonga* (treasures) through virtual initiatives that serve *both* cultural revitalization *and* scientific advancement” (Schorch et al. 2016: 51). While mana taonga is a concept associated with the past and traditional cultural practices, its use by Te Papa Tongarewa emphasizes its contemporary manifestation and influence. It is also a museum wide policy that influences non-Māori collections, which will be discussed in a later chapter. This policy is framed by the museum as “a contemporary articulation of customary concepts of mana and taonga...Te Papa recognizes the role of communities in enhancing the care and understanding of collections and taonga...mana taonga meant literally the power and authority (mana) that resides in and derives from cultural treasures (taonga)” (Schorch et al. 2016: 54). The creation of a culturally based interpretation of

new museology is undeniably important for this new museum moment, and its application to Māori objects and collections around the world is incredibly useful for museum staff. However, I am hesitant to apply this concept, as well as the term taonga¹, to any non-Māori objects and collections not based within Aotearoa.

Due to the colonial histories of museums that have separated them as elite institutions that represented, often problematically, various cultures, there has been a trend in institutions adopting a cultural center model, which does not typically have those same stigmas attached to it. Some argue that cultural centers are the museums of the future and will begin replacing the traditional Western museums that dominate the world today (Message 2006). Message states, “the preference for newness and the privileging of cultural diversity have combined in museums built since approximately the mid-1990s to produce a new kind of institution that seeks to function more like a cultural centre. Rather than privileging traditional ideas of museological practice, the new museum aspires to a museumlike exhibitionary complex” (Message 2006: 198). Here Message highlights the importance of ‘newness’ for these museums following the cultural center model, most noticeable in their new and distinct architectures, and exhibitions, and display of objects. These new methods being highlighted within cultural centers are examples of the way this new museology is taking root in the creation of these new institutions. Though the idea of ‘newness’ is often associated with cultural centers, it is helpful to keep in mind that many of them continue to work with ‘old’ objects in their exhibitions. If they can execute this new museology with relative success, then traditional Western museums, should be able to do the same, at least with regards to exhibitions, as their architectures are quite literally set in stone.

¹ Which I will further discuss in the following chapter.

Dialogic Museum Model

Though none of the museums highlighted in this project, explicitly label themselves as dialogic, it is the model most easily adopted by traditional museums like the American Museum of Natural History and the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum. For that reason, I have decided to take a moment to discuss in more detail this model, that I predict will begin gaining popularity in similar museums. The dialogical approach, sometimes referred to as an inquiry-driven approach, is another key aspect of this new museology. At the heart of this approach is consistent communication between museums and their communities of service. In dialogic museums, the collections are structured with the purpose of serving the exhibitionary and public programming needs of the museum, in contrast with inherited collections from older traditional museums. For traditional Western museums, “an inquiry driven approach shakes the foundations of this traditional practice, placing much greater emphasis on the assimilation by curators of insights from the voluminous new historical scholarship of recent decades and suggesting a coordinated planning process for exhibitions and collections development” (Tchen 1992: 289-290). In those examples, there is a rather likely chance that parts of the collection will not be used in any present or future exhibitions because they simply do not fit the current message of the museum.² For museums in this position, most do not know what to do with these parts of the collection, in many cases they do not even have curators or collection managers in charge of them and are instead looked over by curators from other collections. Though each museum that exercises the dialogical approach does so in its own unique way based on their collections and service

² This is the case at Te Papa Tongarewa with their Foreign Ethnology Collection that contains objects from cultures around the world. The current focus of the museum on Aotearoa specifically, has led these collections to be neglected, or as I term as an example of deep collections. While there is no curator or collection manager specifically for this collection, it is looked over by a History collection manager when there is time (personal interview).

communities, there are some more general traits that also characterize the approach. At the top of the list is collaboration between the museum and community members, emphasizing a process-based exhibition style over an output-based style, encouraging all museum visitors to contribute to in the conversation around and contribute to the exhibit. Another trait of this approach is acknowledging an exhibition as a space meant for knowledge and memory sharing and not just a space to display objects.

In his piece “Creating a Dialogic Museum: The Chinatown History Museum Experiment” John Kuo Wei Tchen discusses the Chinatown History Museum’s creation as an example of a dialogue-driven museum. This museum did not inherit any collections of its own, so it built their collections over time from their exhibitions and programs. As a result, the collection directly reflected the needs of the museum. To engage with the community, the Chinatown History Museum took the unique approach of hosting school reunions for the local grade school P.S. 23 and encourages attendees to make donations to the museum and record their experiences of the neighborhood as it changed over time. The area now known as Chinatown has been the home of many different ethnic populations that have settled in New York and have given way over time to different groups. Thus, they are attempting to not only tell the story of the Chinese-American, New York-specific, population, but of a much larger population that has called the Chinatown area home over the years. Tchen (1992) outlines three needs the museum is attempting to meet. First, telling the story of groups of people who have largely been ignored in the telling of New York’s history, especially when visitors can make personal connections to the stories being told through their exhibitions, like that of the laundry and garment workers. Next, using people’s memories of the past to learn from and make connections to the present and the future. These acts of memory, within a public space, encourages visitors to become more actively engaged

with the museum through both exhibition contribution and public program attendance. Finally, as visitors recall their own pasts, in relation to the pasts of others, allows them to rethink their own histories and identities. One major problem that the Chinatown History Museum, and other newer museums, face is the issue of funding. This largely constricts what programs the museum can execute and the number of staff they have on hand to engage with the public within their exhibitions. It is largely through these engagements within the exhibitions that the museum learns what is and is not working within their exhibits, and many are committed to adjusting and replacing aspects of certain exhibits per visitor feedback.

In “Dialogical Curating: Towards Aboriginal Self-Representation in Museums” Leanne Unruh offers two case studies of dialogic museums. In these two case studies, the dialogic approach is tied to the still new trend of decolonizing the museum, from a place that has privileged the Western perspective to one that highlights indigenous self-representation. Unlike Tchen, Unruh explores the theoretical aspect of the dialogic approach in regards to art specifically. For her, the idea of ‘artist as genius’ must be replaced with a more collaborative role. It also suggests a need for art to be viewed as an open-ended process rather than as a final complete piece of work. Though discussed regarding art specifically, Unruh’s statements can be applied to non-art objects within the exhibits they are displayed. The dialogic approach is offered as a possible, positive change that museums can make. This is in opposition to the call for abolishing museums that many critics, from both academic and indigenous communities, have levelled against museum. While a museums link to knowledge and how it disperses, it remains the same, Unruh suggests a change in the authorship of that knowledge. The curator needs to become a facilitator between the museum and the communities as opposed to the singular authoritative voice.

The dialogic approach proposed in these selections offers a unique approach to the critiques museums are facing. The need for collaboration appears obvious, in my opinion, and most examples of its execution in these museums has appeared to be successful. Though it is within the new museums, who can implement this approach from their creation, that the approach is most suited, its usefulness in other institutions should be further explored. The Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia successfully implemented this approach with regards to the Musqueam community, but this was largely due to their proximity to that community. This would be a much more difficult to implement within museums that do not benefit from being near whichever source community they are trying to collaborate with. For these larger museums that contain objects and collections from numerous indigenous groups, the dialogic approach is also difficult due to the impossibility of equal collaboration with every community. In the case of these institutions, the communities they are closest too, often those within their respective metropolitan areas typically do not contain members from the indigenous source communities. The use of online collection databases, such as the Reciprocal Research Network is a possible solution to this problem, but only if there are already connections and rapport between museum curators and community elders, or others in positions of authority.

Though much of the dialogical approach is geared around the collaboration of museums and communities on exhibits and public programs, the role of objects is still an intriguing one to think through. My first thought on this concerns the nature of deep collections in these newer museums that implement the dialogic approach from their creation. If their collections are specifically collected with the intent of being used for exhibits, would their ‘deep collections’ or parts of the collections that are rarely interacted with or displayed, be significantly smaller than their larger more traditional counterparts? As Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, quoted by Tchen, stated,

“the importance of objects lies not so much in their material value but in the value of the meaning people invest in them” (1992: 316). But if objects begin to be less important and are replaced by more information-based options, particularly the digital, what will be their new role? One experience that objects can facilitate, possibly better than their digital counterparts, comes with the engagements and moments they can facilitate. Both Unruh (2015) and Corrin (2012) mention different moments where objects ‘come alive’ or ‘speak’ to visitors, both in the storage and the exhibits. In the first instance, it was when Musqueam weavers could see their blankets in the museum collections that these pieces changed in the eyes of the curators. It was through this experience that the collaboration between these two groups occurred. This experience is a rather common one that many museum professionals have experienced, but these moments almost always occur in the back of house, storage areas of museums. The Fred Wilson collaboration with the Maryland Historical Society was “about the power of objects to speak when museum practices are expanded and the artificial boundaries museums build are removed” (Corrin 2012: 120). This ability that objects have seems to be particularly useful for the more traditional, older museums to enter this dialogic approach and begin making positive changes with the end goal of attempting to decolonize their museums and allow for more indigenous self-representation and authorship/ownership of the knowledge museums hold in the eyes of society.

Cultural Center Model

The final model associated with new museology deserves attention for two reasons. First, many new institutions are turning away from the more traditional model towards the cultural center model because of what it offers. Second, it is this model that Te Papa Tongarewa has attempted to emulate thus integrating aspects of the cultural center into a historically traditional

museum into one institution. The Vanuatu Cultural Center is an example of an institution that has successfully implemented the cultural center model within Oceania. Though it is not known for its collections, its success is largely measured by the fact that its visitors are almost entirely local community members. Lissant Bolton, of the British Museum, describes the mission of this center as follows, “the emphasis of the Cultural Center is on the recording of knowledge—songs, stories, ceremonies— on audio and video tape, on the revival and continuance of *kastom* in rural contexts, and on the documentation of historically and culturally significant sites around the country” (1997: 28). Similarly, the Centre Culturel Tjibaou (CCT) in New Caledonia aims to highlight the continued presence of the Kanak people despite the painful and recent political issues the country is facing. The CCT’s location in the heavily colonized city of Nouméa and distinct architecture offer several reminders to the colonizers of the continued Kanak presence. Through the striking buildings, designed by architect Renzo Piano, purposefully resemble unfinished Kanak houses, they are designed by an Italian architect and funded by the French government. They serve as an equal reminder, for those aware of their presence and meaning, of the colonial presence on indigenous Kanak land (Message 2006). Unlike the Cultural Center of Vanuatu, the CCT struggles to bring in local Kanak visitors. Message hypothesizes on their absence by quoting Emmanuel Kassarhérou who proposed that this was possibly because the Kanak people are hesitant to be in places that house objects from the past. She goes on to further explain, “museums are only partly the emanations of an indigenous cultural personality: they do not really meet the needs of the great majority of indigenous Pacific islanders” (Message 2006: 151).

When Kanak visitors do come to the CCT, they are not often found within these ‘unfinished houses’ but rather are most commonly found on the grounds of the CCT, in the

physical environment and near the vegetation indigenous to their land. The focus on local visitors is particularly important for the Vanuatu Cultural Center because of its present concern with fostering a national identity among a diverse group of communities indigenous to Vanuatu. While Western museums are concerned with fostering a national citizenship among visitors (Duncan 1994) the traditional Western museum practices are not compatible to the circumstances in Vanuatu (Bolton 1997). Bolton goes on to further explain the unique positioning of the Vanuatu Cultural Center by stating, “the idea that the practice of local knowledge produces certain object types is equally different to the idea of stylistic characteristics as markers of provenance. Melanesian museums straddle such disjunction with difficulty. The idea that museums can unite by association the diverse places within a new nation, asserting national unity, assumes that objects represent places, an assumption which has no meaning in terms of indigenous thought and practice” (Bolton 1997: 32). With this in mind it makes sense that the traditional Western museum would not work in a place like Vanuatu, and the cultural center model may be more appropriate. Just as individual museums are searching for ways to become more self-aware and self-critical of their past actions, so too must cultural centers determine individually what works for them and what does not. What may be successful in one place may not make sense in another.

The National Museum of the American Indian in Washington D.C. is an example of a more traditional Western museum attempting to decolonize itself, and in the process become more collaborative in its dealings with source communities and those reflecting some of the cultural center model’s intentions. Paul Chaat Smith, its first curator, discusses the experience of creating this museum from his uniquely placed position in the piece “Critical Reflections on the Our Peoples Exhibit” (2008). For Smith the opening of the National Museum of the American

Indian was an important moment as the United States government recognized the need for such an institution, despite having never offered an apology to Native Americans for their poor treatment in the past as well as the present. Though this conversation has not made the progress that Native Americans, and others, would wish, the creation and opening of this museum has been cited as a step in the right direction. Smith writes that his goal, and the goal of his team including Dr. Jolene Rickard, whom he describes as one of the best Native American curators in the world, was to tell the “biggest story never told”. This is the story of how the contact between Europeans and Native Americans was the most significant and influential event to ever occur in world history. A very grand proposal that rightly places Native Americans on a level of equal importance to their European colonizers and shows how since contact Native Americans have been pushed to the furthest margins of world, something he and his team intend to fix with the National Museum of the American Indian. However, the NMAI was heavily criticized for not doing enough to ‘decolonize’ itself and discuss the harsh truths of colonization that continue to impact Native Americans today.

One critic, Amy Lonetree (2009) found two main issues with the museum. First, that the museum combined an indigenous view of history, as distinct from the dominant Western view, with a postmodernist presentation of that history. And secondly that the museum did not give proper attention to the history of colonization and genocide that the United States government subjected Native Americans too. In her piece “Museums as Sites of Decolonization: Truth Telling in National and Tribal Museums” she continually reiterates that the ‘hard truths’ of colonization are ignored when they should have been given a place of prominence, as no museum can claim to be decolonized without first undertaking this action. She offers a better example of an institution tackling these problems and implementing a new museology in the

Saginaw Chippewa Ziibiwing Center for Anishinabe Culture and Lifeways in Mount Pleasant, Michigan, as an ideal example. This Center utilized theme driven exhibitions, story-telling and first person narrative, contemporary portrayals of Native Americans, and an exhibition organization driven by Anishnabe culturally beliefs. (Lonetree 2009). While the Ziibiwing Center can focus solely on Anishinabe culture, the National Museum of the American Indian has the much broader task of attempting to exhibit and present all Native American cultures. In his piece Smith (2008) discusses this difficulty correctly stating that no one-person can know all any culture, and it is an impossible task that would have to exclude some groups. Though the NMAI was adopting policies attributed to a new museology, it did not (or could not) make the same choices that the Ziibiwing Cultural Center made. For many scholars, this is an example of why cultural centers are the preferred institution of the future.

While this chapter has attempted to lay the foundation for understanding how museums first came to exist and to explain the current trends in museology, it is from this overview that I became aware of the neglect endured by deep collections. The next chapter moves inside the doors of these institution to examine what happens within them. The final two models introduced in this chapter begin the discussion on the interior of museums, but I will go into greater detail into some of the most important characteristics for museums to possess during this moment of new museology and increased importance for communities during this time of Oceanic scholarship. If Oceania is truly the place where museology is making the greatest strides in bridging collections to communities in a global context, as I would argue, then it is within Oceanic affiliated museums and collections that attention should be paid. However, the issues I raise will be informed by experiences across the globe. The third chapter narrows its focus only

to museums and collections with Oceanic connections.

CHAPTER TWO: FROM THE INSIDE

In this chapter I argue that it is through objects housed within museum deep collections that important issues raised by the museology of our time now need to be explored in order to complement work on representation and meaning making in museum's exhibit spaces and community access in those exhibit object's social and semiotic lives, which is why these hidden collections deserve more scholarly attention. This is because it is within deep collections, defined and discussed in this chapter, that the majority of objects live, and where much of the work within museums to align with the emerging dialogic and cultural center models needs to be conducted. Many museums are currently facing the difficult question of how to stay relevant in the contemporary political, economic, and cultural climate where their existence and past colonial histories are being questioned and denounced. While there is much work going on within museums attempting to address these problems, there is still much work to be done. Not surprisingly, it is within collections, arguably the largest parts of museums, that much work is being done on the topic of changing museum practices. It is the theoretical discussion of objects and collections that is the subject of this chapter. Though I worked with several scholars from a variety of backgrounds with various museum institutions on the theoretical level, the three museums highlighted by this project are the American Museum of Natural History, The Bishop Museum, and Te Papa Tongarewa. Each institution contains multiple collections, as do all museums, though my work is focused within their collections connected with indigenous Oceanic communities. Beginning with a discussion around the various terms adopted to address objects and collections, I then provide a brief historical overview of the ways museums have classified objects up to the present. This is followed by a discussion of the various interpretations

that have been applied to objects, and the importance and difficulty of accessing objects and deep collections. Finally, this chapter concludes with a consideration of the role the museum itself plays in shaping and influencing its objects and collections and the issue of agency.

What's in a Name?

Before addressing the issues most closely associated with new museology, I begin with the assertion that museum terminology deserves more attention than it has been given. It is necessary to first introduce and discuss the terms that have been employed by museum scholars, both past and present, so I can properly situate myself and my own deployment of these museum entangled terms. These language choices impact the other issues raised within this moment of new museology. Thus, I posit that museum language should be given a similar consideration by academics, instead of just a passing thought.

Object, artifact/artefact, thing, materiality, art object, semiophore, palimpsest, *taonga*. I have been circling these terms over and over again as I contemplate my project. The previously mentioned terms are some of the most prominent that I have come across from scholars of material culture and museums, though one does not appear more often than others. Many scholars take the time within their work to explain their decision-making process for using their term of choice. In *Art and Agency* Alfred Gell uses the term art object which he defines as, “objects about which we may, and commonly do, speak—but they themselves either do not speak, or they utter natural language in graphemic code” (1998: 6). What is particularly unique about Gell’s choice is that he argues these art objects do not have meanings nor do they symbolize anything. In a discussion of materiality, Tim Ingold writes, “materials are ineffable. They cannot be pinned down in terms of established concepts or categories. To describe any

material is to pose a riddle whose answer can be discovered only through observation and engagement with what is there. The riddle gives the material a voice and allows it to tell its own story: it is up to us, then, to listen and from the clues it offers, to discover what is speaking” (2013: 31). This focus on the materiality of objects and lack of distinct meaning and symbolism, is somewhat echoed in various arguments for the word ‘thing’ as a preferred term. Krzysztof Pomian distinguishes things as “objects which were useful in that they could be consumed, could provide a means of subsistence, render raw materials fit for consumption, or even act as protection from the vagaries of the climate” (1990: 30). The editors of *Thinking Through Things: Theorising Artefacts Ethnographically* argue, “the advantage of ‘things’ as a term is that, unlike ‘objects’, ‘artefacts’ and ‘materiality,’ they carry minimal theoretical baggage” (Henare et al. 2007: 5). While I agree with this statement, I am personally opposed to that term because it sounds trivial and inappropriate when many of the pieces, specifically those of Oceanic origin, are pieces of great power and importance. In her work with Hawaiian objects involved in the discussion of repatriation under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), Angela Neller uses both artefact and object. She closes her article “From Utilitarian to Sacred: The Transformation of a Traditional Hawaiian Object” by drawing a connection to the work of W. Richard West and Native American artefacts. She writes, “West wrote that objects have direct links to the stories of the people, they give us a sense of who we are, and they help us to form our world views (West 1997: 7). Traditional Hawaiian artefacts are important to all Native Hawaiians for developing an understanding of and pride in their ancestral heritage, “*I ka was mua, ka wa mahope*, the future is in the past” (Neller 2002: 138). It is interesting to note that in defining many of these terms, the authors frequently invoke the term object to provide context

for their specific definitions and arguments for the use of specific terms. However, this term deserves to be discussed as well.

Though a very common term that is frequently used in and outside of the museum world that rarely demands a definition, like the word thing, objects is slightly difficult to clearly define. Joshua Bell, curator at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History elaborates on his perception of objects in relation to his project *Recovering Voices* states, “I certainly see objects more as an unfinished process than a finished thing. At the end of the day, an object is not just the sum of its parts in front of you. It’s a momentary constellation and assemblage of various factors. The museum slows down that on-going process giving one time to contemplate an object in one phase, and through our community visits, we are all coming to understand this better” (2015: 15). Bell’s definition highlights how community interaction has impacted his understanding of objects, which I will return to later in this paper, but for him objects are much more than just their materiality.

Another approach to objects is provided by Pomian (1990) who describes the role objects play in making the invisible around us visible, thus connecting these two realms in a physical way that can be seen when one views an object. I feel the need to mention at this point my own preference for the term “objects,” though I am not entirely comfortable with this term in every situation either. Perhaps my predilection for the term “objects” comes from my own intellectual genealogy that began with my work at the American Museum of Natural History where the Pacific ethnology curator referred to the pieces in the collection as ‘objects.’ It is this term that I most keep coming back to as I look for a word or phrase to encompass the wide-ranging collections found in the three institutions I have selected for this project. However, if my draw to this term is only because of my first introduction to museum collections, I do not believe that

alone makes it the best choice for me going forward simply because it is a part of the museum culture I was ‘born’ into. Though I continue to use this word in a very general sense when discussing collections and museums, this discussion around terms allows me to think more critically of my own use of words, as well as those of scholars writing on the same topic.

A new term that I came across in my research that I have not heard used by any of the museum professionals I have encountered is semiophore. It is Krzysztof Pomian who invokes this term and offers a detailed explanation of it in his work *Collectors and Curiosities* (1990). He contrasts semiophores with things (as previously defined) and states that semiophores are, “objects which were of absolutely no use, [cannot be consumed, be a means of subsistence, or protect people from the climate] ...but which, being endowed with meaning, represented the invisible” (1990: 30). He goes on to further expand on this definition with two conclusions about semiophores. His first conclusion is that it is upon becoming part of a collection that a semiophore fulfills its ultimate purpose. His second conclusion, which Pomian identifies as the more important conclusion, deals with the relationship between meaning and usefulness as mutually exclusive concepts. Thus, the more meaning a semiophore holds the less useful it is as a thing. In addition to these key conclusions, he goes on to identify several ‘new’ classes of semiophores that have been created to expand on his initial definition over time, as he links each new class with a particular academic movement occurring simultaneously. These new classes include objects used for academic study, objects considered antiquities and from exotic places, pictures and modern works of arts, and scientific instruments (Pomian 1990: 35-37). The relationship between usefulness and meaning that Pomian introduces is especially useful when considering how entering a collection can change the very nature of an object. I agree with his

highlighting of these two concepts as integral to understanding objects in collections, but I am not convinced of his argument that they are mutually exclusive.

Despite my preference for the term “object,” it is a Western word, like ‘art object’, ‘artifact/artefact’, ‘semiophore’ and ‘thing.’ With material culture studies and museum studies being Western disciplines, it is unsurprising that these concepts have been applied to objects from other cultures. When I consider the obligations humans have to objects (Ouzman 2006), one of my responsibilities to these objects is to use terms appropriate to their cultures and Oceanic epistemologies whenever possible. The most well-known indigenous term in relation to objects and collections remains the Māori word *taonga*. Of all the terms, I have previously mentioned this remains the most difficult to truly understand, and I have relied heavily on the work of Paul Tapsell (1997) to inform my grasp of it. This difficulty stems from the fact that I am not Māori and thus cannot fully understand all that it encompasses. In the past and present, many scholars offer over simplified explanations for *taonga*, equating it with property or treasure; however Tapsell explains, “for Māori, if an item, object or thing is described as *taonga* it immediately elicits a strong emotional response based upon ancestral experiences settings, and circumstances. The underlying force driving this response to *taonga* is *whakapapa*³” (1997: 326). He goes on to highlight three Māori concepts that are also associated with *taonga*. The first of these is *mana*⁴, or power, which comes from a *taonga*’s affiliation with various ancestors; it increases over time as it passes from one generation to the next and as each generation

³ “whakapapa: genealogy; to layer one upon the other; kin ties; systematic framework ordering descendants under common ancestors; genealogical descent lines connecting gods with all things living” (Tapsell 1997: 326).

⁴ “mana: authority; power; prestige; status; integrity; self-esteem; source of energy from the gods transmitted through ancestors; ancestral power embracing people and their estate” (Tapsell 1997: 327).

demonstrates its own strength. The second concept provides a balance to mana and is *tapu*⁵ “which acts as a social controlling agent preventing an item’s mana, or power, from being transgressed by the state of *noa*. The greater mana of a taonga, the greater its tapu, which demands careful management of the item” (Tapsell 1997: 328). The third concept associated with taonga is *korero*⁶ or oratory and is identified as the most important of the three. Korero is “metaphorically compared to a cloak which shrouds the ancestral item in ‘warmth of knowledge’, which can include rituals, genealogical recitations, and historical stories” (Tapsell 1997: 328). In his detailed discussion of taonga, Tapsell goes on to further elaborate on these three main concepts, but I will conclude my discussion here. According to him, for an object to be considered taonga all three of these concepts must be present, and it should go without saying, they must be also Māori objects. While this is the best indigenous term I have found in my research to represent a wider range of objects, it is important to note that this term should not be applied to non-Māori pieces, and that not all Māori objects in a collection should be considered taonga.

The most comparable terms I have come across in Hawaiian are *na mea makame*, a general term for treasures, and *wai wai ali’i*, or chiefly treasures (Andrade and Kahanu 2015). While these indigenous terms may also be lacking in certain respects, I am committed to using them as often as possible when appropriate, particularly when speaking directly about specific objects. Finally, I would like to briefly mention the fact that some objects are also viewed by

⁵ “tapu: protect; sacred; prohibition; set apart; indication of presence of ancestors. If transgressed can inflict ill fortune. The balancing state to tapu is noa or profane, common, every day, free of ancestral influence” (Tapsell 1997: 328).

⁶ “korero: oratory; to speak knowledge; speech; talk; verbal discourse; orally transmitted knowledge; truth account of the past; historical utterance; narratives associated with ancestors” (Tapsell 1997: 328).

indigenous communities as their ancestors, which is most often because of an objects affiliation with an ancestor either through production or ownership, like in the case of the dog skin cloak Pareraututu (Tapsell 1997) and the *'ahu 'ula*, or feathered cloak, and *mahiole* of Kalaniopu'u respectively. Though not all objects are considered ancestors, it is important for me to be respectful of those that are seen that way and to identify them appropriately. When reading through the various arguments around terms, I find myself partially convinced of the points they raise, finding moments of agreement with the various authors, but I realize the need to make my own choice in the terms I will use for my project. For now, I will continue to use the term object to describe the pieces that generally make up a collection, but when speaking about and to specific objects I will use more specific terms whenever possible.

The final term I would like to discuss is deep collections. Unlike the previously debated terms I have already discussed; collection is generally an agreed upon term for the museum world. A collection itself can be defined as being “made up of separate parts and diverse objects that have been selected to construct a unified and single entity” (Allen and Waite 2014: 121). While in museums this single entity is often divided into geographic or academic areas, aiming to represent as fully as possible that area, personal collections are different. For many individual collectors, past and present, they collect based on their likes, dislikes, and interests. Something about certain objects draws their attention while others do not. Thus, a Western collection is “what is chosen, preserved and exchanged in society, historically, provides a scale of significance and meaning to objects within a system of symbols and values” (Allen and Waite 2014: 121). Pomian further elaborates on the definition of collection, “the number of objects going to make up a collection depends on several different factors, including the place where they are amassed, the type of the particular society, the state of its technology and its way of life,

its production capacity and ability to stock the surplus, and the importance it attaches to the use of objects to establish communication between the visible and invisible. This means that the number necessarily varies considerably in time and space and can only be used in very exceptional circumstances to distinguish a collection from a mere heap of objects” (1990: 25). As stated earlier, the collections I am interested in for the purposes of this project are Oceanic/Pacific entangled collections, which are defined as such because of the places the objects in them originate. These objects are also important for the study of Pacific history as it embraces the need for culturally relevant ways of studying history that includes embodied knowledge, the oral tradition, and I would argue objects (Ballard 2014). For the purposes of my thesis, I am adopting the term “deep collections” to further elaborate on museums and their collections. Though it is encompassed within the more general collections term, deep collections refer to a distinct aspect of these collections. I define deep collections as the collections that remain the most invisible within a museum, in other words, those parts of a collection that are rarely, if ever put on display, that many within and outside of the museum remain unaware.

There are a number of different objects that make up deep collections, and a number of these objects fall into one or more of the following categories: everyday objects, objects for which there are numerous examples, unprovenanced objects, damaged objects, and aesthetically unappealing objects. Future work on the ‘nature of deep collections’ is likely to reveal a number of other important object categories in deep collections. This term came about from conversations with my committee chair, Alexander Mawyer, as I searched for a way to distinguish the displayed collections from their undisplayed counterparts. It is inspired by the geological concept of deep time, which is fitting since the history of objects or things is commonly measured using the geological time scale (Pomian 1990). With this discussion,

complete and my justifications made for the terms I will be deploying throughout the remainder of this thesis, I turn to the issues raised with new museology that I deem important.

Object Classifications

These classifications have been useful for those working within museums since their creation. The associations between museums as holders of knowledge further reinforces a need to place an object within a set of parameters. However, to those individuals not within the museum, and to an extent even those within it, these classifications are largely meaningless. To that end, it is important for museum staff to be reminded of this, and it is done by bringing individuals into the museums and their deep collections who view objects differently. An experience demonstrating this was shared by a Māori curator at Te Papa Tongarewa when a woman caught sight of an object that she recognized as familiar:

“There was one a nanny to an elder woman who works in Wellington and her people are from Tūhoe so a bit up the way. And Tūhoe are kind of considered like the last tribes to be colonized of all the tribes, and someone would argue they were never colonized because they were so deep in the bush you couldn’t hardly get there. Anyways, she brought in all her stuff that she was looking after, and I was taking them through and there was a carving, a big carving, that was sitting in the collection store that’s got a label attached to it saying its Tūhoe, and I had just started, I think I had been at the job maybe a year and there’s always a bit of anxiety when you take a group back of house, because I was so young, and in the Māori world I’m still young. I was still a bit on edge trying hard to look like I knew what I was doing. And she made a beeline straight for her carving, the carving that came from her tribal area, and before I could do anything she went up and she was crying over the carving and she hongied it. She was connecting to it because what we do on the marae we’re very tactile with our taonga, you’re allowed to touch everything. You’re encouraged to touch everything because they are your ancestors. So I was standing there, as fresh curator, trying very hard to be impressive and watching a visitor break one of the cardinal rules, which is don’t touch. What do you do? You have to make a decision in that moment. Shall I make an organizational decision or shall I make a cultural decision? I made a cultural decision. Stand back, this is not your place. That’s hers, those bones, her people made that so you stand back. It was a bit of a learning point for me. Where I knew where my loyalties lay at that point. That happens all the time now. I take groups through and some of them will sneak touches, cause we’re tactile we like to touch things. Museums show their love by not touching, Māoris show

their love by touching so I tell them at the beginning of a tour ‘Please don’t touch, we have to make sure these things last for a hundred years, and if a person touches it every week eventually it’ll wear it out faster’ but if I see them trying to make a sneaky touch then I’ll like glance away, it’s a slight cultural bias, so that makes me feel like I’m not interfering in their relationship” (personal interview).

In this moment, how the museum classified this object was of little to no importance. Instead it was the woman’s ability to see this object as connected to her and her family was of the utmost importance.

The material objects collected by people and museums have been described and classified by academics in many ways throughout time. Susan M. Pearce (1994) found three types of collecting modes: souvenirs, fetish objects, and systematics. These three classifications are only the beginning of many more, and the processes associated with them are never ending. As Pearce writes, “the human person as subject creates from within himself an entity of whatever kind- including material artefacts- which assumes an external existence as an object; but then takes back this creation to use it as part of the next burst of creative activity” (1994: 202). James Clifford (1994) has made further distinctions, in regards to the specific types of objects that are collected by people and museums. In his work “Collecting Ourselves” he focuses on collecting in the West, reinforcing the idea previously mentioned by Evans (2014) that identity and collecting are closely related stating, “collecting has long been a strategy for the development of a possessive self, culture and authenticity” (Clifford 1994: 260). Clifford goes on to diagram an ‘art-culture system’ to determine the authenticity of collected objects. In this system, objects are classified as either authentic or inauthentic and masterpieces or artefacts which then allows them to be classified as either art, non-culture, or non-art (Clifford 1994: 263). While these classifications can be helpful, there are some objects that cannot be so easily labeled. Clifford specifically places African and Oceanic artefacts into this liminal place and recognizes the power they have in not fitting cleanly into the labels created by academics. Thus, the “resistance to

classification...could remind us of our lack of self-possession, of the artifices we employ to gather a world around us” (Clifford 1994: 266). By studying Oceanic objects or artefacts, I will hopefully be able to see this object resistance in museums.

For all the work that has been done on how to classify various objects, museum classifications remain problematic for a number of reasons. While Clifford (1994) discussed the ‘resistance to classification’ present in Oceanic objects, in her piece “Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship” Carol Duncan (1991) highlights how Oceanic cultures are ranked in the same institutions in comparison to Western cultures. She concludes her piece by explaining that museums have historically been very active in the ranking of various people with Europeans at the pinnacle of the pyramid and Indigenous communities being relegated beneath them. Though this thought pattern is largely disavowed by most people today, it’s lasting impact in how museums classified objects and their collections remains. This can be seen in the gallery layout of most museums where Western and East Asian collections are often featured prominently in prime gallery space while African and Pacific collections are much more difficult for visitors to reach, unless they are specifically seeking them out. Finally, the incorrect classification of objects remains a problem for many institutions to this day. Demonstrated in the restoration of a supposed canoe at the National Museums Scotland, Chantal Knowles (2013) explains how an object incorrectly classified as a Māori war waka was, in actuality, a composite object that could not be correctly classified because nothing else like it existed. Thus, this waka ‘fell through the museum cracks’ until this restoration project sought to fully understand it. One can only imagine how many other objects have been incorrectly labelled and are forgotten within the museums where they reside. This discussion of classification is necessary because “all museums are exercises in classification,’ and it is precisely from their position as ‘classifying houses’ that

museums become institutions of knowledge and technologies of power. In collecting some objects and not others, in describing and naming them, in displaying them in one way as opposed to another, and in constructing contexts for them, museums establish their sense of authority” (Kahn 1995: 324). This power has largely been held in the hands of Western academics who made many of their decisions for classifying objects without true collaboration with source communities, and unfortunately this complicates how we come to understand objects within a museum collection. Though there are changes being made to how objects are being classified and the languages used in their classification this is occurring on an institutional basis.

Object Interpretations

Just as there is diversity in the objects that can be collected and classified, there have been various methods for interpreting these objects within their collections, such as being ancestors (Tapsell 1997) or palimpsests (Ames 1994). According to Appaduari (1988) objects, just like people, have social lives. Ames states, “the object as commodity, as artefact, as specimen, as art, as someone else’s heirloom, treasured cultural heritage, or sacred emblem: these are different ways of seeing the same thing” (1994: 101). In the earliest days of material culture studies, objects were evaluated on a primarily evolutionary basis, that emphasized a scientific classification for objects. After the concept of ‘culture’ was raised in academia, material culture studies changed. Instead of using one object, or type of object, to represent an entire culture, academics began looking at a broader range of objects to understand life within that culture. This approach is still largely prevalent in museums today, particularly within the three institutions I am studying. Finally, “recent studies that place people and objects within historical settings facilitate an investigation of dynamic cultural practices and of how the past

influences how their society operates in the modern world (Kaeppler 1991)” (Neller 2002: 129). While this covers some of the general ways that objects have been interpreted from the past to the present, I will now specifically discuss a few of these interpretations.

Daniel Miller argues in his book *Stuff* (2010) that it is through material culture that we have the ability to understand our humanity and our cultures. This approach is applicable to all cultures across the globe, and he begins his work by explaining that “we too are stuff, and our use and identification with material culture provides a capacity for enhancing, just as much as for submerging, our humanity.” (Miller 2010: 6). By studying the objects created by a specific culture, we can broaden our understanding of that culture. This also implies that through understanding the culture that creates these objects we can learn more about the objects themselves. This relationship between culture and objects is a distinct one that Miller (2010) highlights and provides a useful foundation for my approach to interpreting and understanding Oceanic objects. Influenced by the work of Gombrich, Miller goes on to discuss how objects are frames that provide the context of our lives and actions. When working properly a frame, or in this case an object, goes largely unnoticed. Unsurprisingly it can be difficult to notice and study what is not easily recognized; this requires great attention to be paid to the details of the object being studied. The theory Miller (2010) creates is called the “humility of things.” He explains “that objects are important, not because they are evident and physically constrain or enable, but quite the opposite. It is often precisely because we do not see them. The less we are aware of them, the more powerfully they can determine our expectations, by setting the scene and ensuring appropriate behavior, without being open to challenge” (Miller 2010:50). Though the ‘humility of things’ is more explicitly related to those objects that are a part of our daily existence that likely go unnoticed by us, objects in museums arrived there because someone

somewhere considered them important. However, there are many objects to be found in the deep collections of museums that are no longer seen that deserve the same attention we would give to the proudly displayed pieces and even the objects that we use daily.

In the piece “The Challenge of the Artifact” William B. Hesseltine argues that material objects or artifacts, as he refers to them, are not a “useful, viable source for the understanding of the human past” (Schlereth 1999: 96). He goes on to defend his point that artifacts cannot answer the questions we have of the past as written documents do. While artifacts are created by humans, and thus can be used as raw data for understanding them, the questions we pose about history and culture, remain unanswered. He contrasts this relativity of an object’s silence with the ‘talkative’ nature of literary documents that help our learning. While Hesseltine appears to make a strong stance on this issue, I was surprised by his conclusion where he states, “of course they [artifacts] can talk. It is only that we cannot talk to them, cannot ask them questions, and cannot understand the answers” (1999: 100). With this concluding remark, he leaves open the possibility that artifacts or objects are speaking, we just cannot understand and communicate with them. Because they do not stand up to the ‘internal criticism’ that written documents do, they cannot be considered at the same level. Gell (1998) discusses a similar idea from an anthropological background as opposed to Hesseltine’s historical stance in how we may or may not be able to speak with objects.

One of the major theories that Asa Berger discusses in his work, *What Objects Mean* (2015) is the Freudian psychoanalytic approach that deals with the “hidden meanings and symbolic significance of various artifacts of material culture” (2015:32). With the psychoanalytic approach, the symbolism of artifacts comes into play, particularly because the majority of people are unaware of what the objects they use symbolize. The meanings conveyed by objects can

extend far beyond their practical functions in society. He goes on to also utilize the semiotic approach, which view objects as signs that are being constantly interpreted. Like the psychoanalytic approach, some of the meanings generated by objects we use are not understood in the same way by others because each viewer brings their own experiences to the table. As a non-Pacific Islander working with Oceanic collections, this is particularly important for me to keep in mind as my personal experiences greatly differ from those of people who inhabit the region, which will have an impact on my initial understandings and interpretations of objects. However, this is not a point of discouragement, just a necessary reminder for myself as an academic that it is important to consult with and learn from source community members and cultural experts as much as possible, particularly when interacting with objects for which I have no point of reference, as “all human-made material things have the potential to convey information— and in some cases, they even convey viewers to another world or state of being” (Ulrich et al. 2015: 164).

Margaret Jolly further explores this point in her piece “Moving Objects: Reflections on Oceanic Collections” (2016) in a discussion of how viewers see objects differently, which can include subversively, within the same exhibit. Just as with speaking and talking, seeing can provide very different interpretations. Writing from within a museum gallery space, Jolly notes the existing presumption from the exhibition organizers that all visitors would be able to ‘see’ the native Hawaiian perspective of the pieces from the collection of James Cook at the Honolulu Museum of Art. The curator made the decision to use minimal labels under the assumption that the objects could ‘speak’ for themselves, but this did not work for all the viewers (Andrade 2007, Drake 2007, Kosasa 2007). A certain level of cultural fluency was necessary to truly understand these pieces, but how are the capacities to see, hear, and speak built with objects? The popular

choice to use words such as: speak, talk, and see is fascinating within a discussion of material culture. The favoring of the eyes and ears excludes the senses of touch, taste, and smell. These senses are just as important when engaging with objects, though they are often forgotten in the museum setting, which has historically frowned heavily on them, though this is beginning to change.

In *Sensible Objects*, editors Edwards, Gosden and Phillips explore our ability to sense certain things, whether through the familiar five Western senses or other senses; inspired by a symposium about engaging the senses in conversations of colonialism, processes of perception and material objects. They raised questions in the beginning of their book to consider in their case studies, “how we sense objects, how different sensory orders clash in and through the encounters of colonialism, and to what degree we can evoke different orders of sensory perception in museums which are themselves institutions that arise largely from colonial histories” (Edwards et al. 2006: xiii). These questions all come back to the relationship between the senses and objects. They make the key point that to truly explore the senses and objects requires us to think differently about our senses, and the senses of others, specifically in relation to material objects. This is done by first recognizing that different cultures may have different concepts of what constitutes a sense. Though I have not come across a distinct set of Oceanic senses in my work, there are certain concepts from specific cultures that present themselves in a way like the senses. The most applicable one for my work I believe is the concept of mana, specifically recognizing and feeling the mana of a specific object when in its presence. There are likely many more similar Oceanic senses that I am unaware of, but that could present themselves in interactions between source community members and objects. This potential for understanding

new senses in relation to objects from a culture is another example of the important work that comes from allowing source communities access to collections and deep collections.

Though the senses are a useful way to interpret objects, it is through words that we are most commonly introduced and experience objects within a museum. While words can be, and are, incredibly helpful and necessary to learning more about objects by themselves, they leave something to be desired. A detailed description of an object is often a sore substitute for the object itself, or at the very least an image of that object. The ability to see an image of an object provides a much-needed frame of reference for those who cannot see or experience an object in person. This experience of reading about or seeing an image of an object is largely absent from museums because their collections already contain the physical objects being discussed.

However, this does not mean that words do not still complicate our understanding of objects in museum collections. Not only do words naturally encourage generalization, but they can also be incredibly deceiving. All the meaning that is communicated through language is based upon the assumption that there are shared and relatable experiences. Most commonly these shared experiences are confined by geography and a common culture. In his work “American Studies: Words or Things” John A. Kouwenhoven argues that objects are not subject to the same limits of language, they can offer a unique and much needed form of knowledge. When it comes to objects, exploring them through all available senses is key. Beyond just sensory exploration of objects, it is just as important to encounter objects within the correct cultural context. They were created in these contexts and per Schlereth (1999) they speak directly to that context. It is through Kouwenhoven’s discussion of objects in museums that, he points out the written labels, and I would hazard archival documents, that often accompany these objects can overshadow them. The problem with this is again in the privileging of the written word over the objects

themselves. Instead there needs to be a balance between the objects and words used around them, as it is most often through the written and spoken word that knowledge about objects is shared, particularly for those of us without an understanding of the necessary cultural context.

Museum Space/Place

Just as museum terminology deserves a discussion, so should museum space be given attention. I argue that museums are spaces and not places for objects according to David Welchman Gegeo's (2001) theory. Though the space of museums changes certain aspects of an objects meaning, it does not change an object's place in the world. Gegeo (2001) makes an important distinction between the concepts of place and space from an indigenous Oceanic perspective. Though he does not apply these concepts to objects and museums I find his theories to be a good fit. He argues that, "indigenous encompasses the place from which we see the world, interact with it, and interpret social reality" (Gegeo 2001: 493). Place refers to a physical location or tie to a specific geographical part of the world, a genealogy that connects one within a kin group, fluency within a native language, the ability to share indigenous perspectives and speak about those issues with proper and cultural knowledge. In contrast "space...refers to a space that is not of one's identity or origin. Space has to do with the location where a...person may be at any given time as necessitated by contemporary conditions" (Gegeo 2001: 494). No matter what space a person, or in my case object, is in, it retains its connection to its place and everything that goes along with it. If objects, specifically Oceanic ones, are aware of their place in the world, then the space that they presently occupy is recognized by them as a temporary, even if it lasts for a hundred years. John T. Schlebecker (Schlereth 1999) writes in "The Use of Objects in Historical Research" about the importance of place in locating an object. The region

or area that it originated from can tell us much about the object itself, particularly if the object is no longer located there, but behind the glass in a museum. Place and region are particularly important to consider when objects are used to learn more about a specific culture, which is often tied to a specific location.

The memories that can arise from being in a museum are largely associated with the objects they house. These objects are heavily layered in their meanings prior to their arrival in the museum, but they gain new layers of meaning upon entering the museum space. Carol Duncan (1991) suggests that these meanings have the possibility to distort an objects' previous meanings. It is no surprise that to understand the many layers of meaning that build up on an object over time requires a specific education from the viewer. Often this must include specific cultural knowledge training as well as an intimate understanding of the message the museum is attempting to create, but it also includes being able to correctly identify the museum ideologies as well (Bennett 1995). Unfortunately, there are some objects whose original meanings have been lost to us and that cannot be recovered, as they are now only known to the object itself. Though some meanings may be forgotten or difficult to find, the multiplicity of meanings associated with objects should include the consideration of the museum space itself and its influencing role in these meanings. Duncan writes in "Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship" that "in referring to museums as ceremonial monuments, my intention is to emphasize the museum experience as a monumental creation in its own right, a cultural artefact that is much more than what we used to understand as museum architecture" (1991: 90). If the museum is a space of ritual, it can be seen in the ways people enter and interact with the exhibits, often in a quiet and somber manner. The museum is a space of both the sacred and the secular, and this dichotomy provides an interesting mix as a home for the objects they house, which can

also be of the secular or sacred nature. Duncan writes, “museum space is carefully marked off and culturally designated as special, reserved for a particular kind of contemplation and learning experience and demanding a special quality of attention, what Victor Turner called liminality” (1991: 91). This concept of liminality is one found throughout the discussion on objects and museums, and makes them both rich sources to consider in relation to my thesis. While viewing an object within a museum space does add multiple layers of meaning that would not exist if viewed in a different context, that space does not necessarily change the object itself; the cultural knowledge that it has should not diminish when outside of a museum, especially when it is viewed within the context of the source community.

Museums play a significant role in the representation of non-Western cultures for often Western audiences (Kahn 1995 and Kaplan 1994). Mullen wrote, “museums and art galleries play an increasingly important role in the construction of cultural knowledge” (1994: 287). In most cases, museums house objects from all over the world, and the ability to reflect all of those distinct epistemologies is not easy. Miriam Kahn describes museums as heterotopias “combinations of different places as though they were one.... Heterotopias involve the construction of places and times by means of the displacement of things” (1995: 324). While Kahn’s discussion of museums as heterotopias focuses on museum exhibition, I would like to apply it to museum deep collections as well. Just as exhibits are designed and objects are arranged in relation to other objects to produce a narrative, so are deep collections found within museum storerooms. Likewise, there are a number of cultures mixed together in these places, even if they are all tied to a specific region of the world, like Oceania. Seeing the meaning created from this mix of cultures through objects can be more deeply explored through the work of Sarah Byrne in her piece “Exposing the Heart of the Museum” with her discussion of

archaeological sensibility within collection storage. Byrne (2013) highlights the ‘heart’ of the museum to be what I am calling deep collections, the vast majority of museum objects that are not on display at any given time. It is particularly the arrangement of these objects within their various storage facilities as various assemblages that Byrne (2013) is interested. She writes, “this essential quality of an assemblage as a material collocation, how objects are situated or juxtaposed in relation to one another, is pertinent when thinking about ethnographic collections. The actual physical collocation and relationship between objects, be they in storerooms or on display, obviously bear little reality to the way in which these objects were used or assembled by source communities or, indeed collectors” (Byrne 2013: 204). Within deep collections the arranging of pieces can be done according to any number of reasons, but each explanation allows for objects to come together in ways that they may never achieve outside of the museum storerooms. The amount of time spent in these storerooms for many objects is significant, and they will most likely be surrounded by different objects the longer they remain in the museum. These arrangements are distinct from their existence outside the museum. When source community members are brought into the storerooms, they change the space with their presence into indigenous places. The importance of the museum as a space, and the specific spaces within it, are tied to the way it influences objects and the way objects influence it in return. In the next section, I will elaborate on how access for source community members can alter that space as well.

The Question of Accessibility

A main issue that has been given prominence at our present moment in museology is accessibility. Simply opening visible and well-known as high value collections, in various ways,

is not enough. I assert that it is imperative that source community members have access to their objects, objects made or owned by their ancestors, objects of which they are descendants in the back rooms, hard to access storage, deep collections. I go on to argue that allowing this access is not only important for these communities, but it is also beneficial to the museum itself. The importance of bringing source or indigenous communities into museums and their collections thus making them more accessible, is one that many scholars advocate for (Peers and Brown 2003 and Henare 2005). In some cases, elders and cultural practitioners are the ones most commonly welcomed into museum deep collection spaces to share their wisdom with their fellow community members and museum staff, though I would suggest that these not be the only source community members welcomed into the deep collections.

In reflecting on the experience of bringing Yup'ik elders into collections of the Museum für Völkerkunde in Germany Fienup-Riordan wrote, "I knew absolutely that it was worth the effort. Ironically, though fragile objects like grass socks and gut-skin parkas will endure in museum collections, elders will not. If we do not bring elders into museums over the next decade, we will lose an opportunity to understand collections in ways...never imagined. More important than any specific information, in the hands of community leaders throughout southwestern Alaska this knowledge of the past has the potential to shape the future" (2003: 40). Though the Yup'ik community is based in Alaska, there can be connections made from their experiences to Oceanic cultures as well. Elders are respected in these cultures, and they are often the knowledge holders. This theme of sharing knowledge for the sake of educating, their own communities and others is dependent on people having the opportunity to interact with their objects in person even if they exist in museums far away from their communities. Another similar project is occurring at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. titled "Recovering

Voices” that seeks to “transform the museum inside and out by facilitating more direct engagement with collections by communities from which they originated in order to make the collections better resources” (Bell 2015: 14). While Bell does not specify who these people are, it is clear that their presence is mutually beneficial to both museum staff members and the source community members themselves.

While mutually beneficial projects and interactions are ideal, I would argue that the benefit for the source community should remain the priority. In describing the debate over a Hawaiian object that was under consideration for repatriation by the Native American Grants Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), Neller (2002) explains that objects can serve as a way to recover cultural practices that were thought to be lost, access to these objects, which are most commonly found in museums, is necessary for these practices to be revitalized. This exact situation occurred at the Bishop Museum:

“We had two distinguished Māori weavers come, and we have a few things that don’t live in Aotearoa that only live here. One of those things was this rain cape. It belonged to the Eric Craig collection, and when they said, ‘We don’t have an example like this at home,’ the guilt that we felt. I thought, ‘You know, this needs to go back, and we’re like somebody needs to request repatriation.’ Of course I didn’t breathe that to my collection manager at the time, but I was like, ‘No, somebody must ask for it back.’ The funny thing is, our cousins in New Zealand are quite interesting because they’re very resilient. One of the two weavers learned how to make an exact copy. She goes, ‘Why do I need that one? I mean it was important for me to see that one, but I’ve made my own now.’ That was the whole thing with our ancestors, they didn’t say you must have the thing that was in the museum, what you need to have is the knowledge that’s embedded in the thing that’s at the museum. If you can figure it out, then perpetuate it. It was an amazing amount of guilt and frustration because being a native Hawaiian, you understand what it’s like to be separated from those things. Or if you don’t have this, what would it mean to have it in your culture” (personal interview)

The knowledge held within these rain capes was accessed by the Māori weaver, so she could take it back with her to her community. In this way, community interaction with objects and deep collections allows for communication to also occur between the past and the present (Kahanu and Andrade 2015 and Knowles 2013). These conversations are often ones that museum staff

may have the privilege of witnessing, and they could change their own relationships with objects. Though access is important, there are a number of reasons why source community members have not had access to museums over the years. Many people view museums as painful and uncomfortable places due to their colonial and imperial histories, and sometimes illegal collection practices. It is important for myself to recognize these painful pasts, but the museum itself needs to recognize and acknowledge them as well. It is impossible to discuss the need for opening museums up and making deep collections more accessible without first admitting that for years they have been closed to source community members. I have personally found museums to be comfortable places, where I have seen objects cared for and protected by the people that work there, but I know this is unfortunately not always the case. While working at the American Museum of Natural History I had the chance to work on several projects that demonstrated these traits. From researching objects in the collection that have never been displayed to a repatriation project between the AMNH and Te Papa Tongarewa in New Zealand, these experiences have shaped my own relationship with objects and museums.

This repatriation, that occurred in the fall of 2013, completely returned the entire collection of Māori human remains ‘owned’ by AMNH with the intent that they will be housed at Te Papa until they are identified and reunited with their iwi’s. The final ceremonies in New York were filled with emotion, an elderly Māori woman performed a wailing cry and all the Te Papa delegates *hongied* with the *toi moko* to warm them, as they had been cold for their entire time in the collection. This process of giving and receiving breath and warmth between the taonga and the delegates was the first step in their journey back to Aotearoa. The Māori elder who initiated the greetings with the *toi moko* was able to communicate with them to learn some of their names and answer their questions about why they were being packed away so strangely.

This event was a turning point for me in my relationship to Oceanic objects, be they human remains or not. It was then I realized that objects are much more than their physical descriptions, and though I had spent time caring for and researching the objects in our collection, I had a very limited understanding of them, due to my cultural differences. This shift within myself may have never happened if I had not been able to witness this interaction, but it showed me just how important it is for Oceanic source communities to have access to their objects, which in this case were ancestors, even if it is within a museum context (Tapsell 1997 and Andrade and Kahanu 2015). Looking back on this experience it is clear to me just how important accessibility is for source community members, but also for museum staff. It also reinforced for me the realization that objects have the ability to speak and communicate with us, though we need to listen to them or in some cases have an interpreter.

I would like to say one more thing on the topic of repatriation as it has come up a few times in this thesis so far and is never far from museum discussion. Despite the sometimes-illegal acquisition of objects and collections, museums remain hesitant and reluctant to consider repatriating pieces back to their source communities. There are some museums and special interest groups who keep it at the forefront of their mission and have successfully handled the repatriation of numerous human remains and other objects (Ayau and Tengan 2002). This is a very curt and quick thought on a highly complicated and complex issue. I have elected to simply introduce it here mainly to set the stage for the distinct roles museum staff and source community members have towards objects in museums.

I have found some of my own experiences with museums echoed in the exhibit *Pasifika Styles* at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Cambridge. At this exhibit, contemporary Pacific artists were invited to not only stage an exhibition in the museum

but to interact with and use objects from the museum's deep collections. This was a very successful exhibit from the artists' point of view who were able to connect with objects that have been separated from their homelands for many years. After the experience, artist Che Wilson shared how his thoughts about museums had changed stating, "in a funny way what I saw in England is that the people looking after our taonga— they had an *arhoa* [love] for our taonga which we over here [in Aotearoa] don't. Over here what I saw was just mana you know: 'I am the curator of this. This is my patch' ...But the personal relationship that I was able to build [in England allowed me to see people] who actually care about the taonga. OK, they call them 'objects' but that's just their job, you know, and you can't get precious about them calling them a thing because... those are just cultural difference" (Raymond et al. 2008: 94). This description of the love Wilson saw curators and other museum staff have for the objects or taonga in their collections is something I have also observed in curators in New York, Hawai'i, and New Zealand. One individual from the Bishop Museum described her experience visiting collections outside of Hawai'i:

"When I visit other collections, Hawaiian collections, I don't always feel they need to come back home. There's some things that like, I went to the Louvre and I saw one of the feather gods, and he looked totally bleached out. He had these goo-goo eyes and I said, 'Oh Uncle, you look so crazy I think you need to come home. You've gone crazy living in this land over here.' It's an obscurity over there, and I think that's also hurtful. It's just a curiosity from somewhere in the Pacific, and there are other things that were part of long forgotten cultures. Then there are things, like I go to Te Papa, and I know that these guys are taking care. And I can visit it anytime, I don't feel like I have to have the thing to say that this is who I am as a Hawaiian, as long as I have that connection then I'm good" (personal interview).

In many cases the museum staff caring for specific collections may not share the same cultural and genealogical ties to the objects as a source community member would, but they can have their own unique connections to objects in the collections placed under their care. This issue emphasizes the benefits that make access a necessity for museums. These types of connections

and care can also be formed with non-indigenous objects. A curator at Te Papa Tongarewa demonstrated this when speaking about her favorite object in the textiles collection:

“There’s a blue wedding dress. It’s a gorgeous blue, so it’s a chemical dye, and it’s just like the sky. It was from a wedding in Wales in 1894. It’s really fashionable, it’s got these ridiculous big sleeves it’s crazy, tiny waist. And it has this tea stained lace with these little yellow glass buttons. When you open it, it has this beautiful lining which totally alters the dress, it’s kind of like a soft brown white lining. It’s all boned, and it’s just so extravagant. I love the fact that when she would have worn this she would have had this ‘X’ silhouette with these huge wide shoulders, tiny waist, and then a big skirt, it just makes me laugh! She’s definitely a person, she’s got character, she’s flat in a drawer, she doesn’t come out because she’s quite fragile. She looks really robust in the drawer, but she’s actually really fragile when you bring her out. And she’s also got under the heavy skirt the little dust hem inside. I just love all the attention to detail that’s inside the dress. I think she was given to the museum by the wearer’s daughter, so she would have come out as a migrant object. So nothing to do with New Zealand, but it’s a part of our cultural heritage, pakeha’s cultural heritage” (personal interview).

This wedding dress, which the curator repeatedly refers to by feminine pronouns, is clearly deeply loved by this curator, who has formed her own ties to her. She is also relegated to the deep collections of Te Papa because of her fragility, which prevents her from being displayed, though her importance is not diminished as well. I close this chapter with an issue that places objects at the center of the relationships between museums, source communities, and museum staff: agency.

The Question of Agency

I would like to close this chapter with a discussion on the agency of objects because I argue that objects are not passive actors in museums. They are active agents within their own lives, even after they enter the museum. In “The Beauty of Letting Go: Fragmentary Museums and Archaeologies of Archive” Sven Ouzman discusses the rights that objects have, “three basic object rights: the right to a life history, agency, and home. These rights may also be stated in the plural, since most artifacts have long, complicated, and multiple biographies” (2006: 277).

Though some objects more immediately call to mind human qualities, that we more readily associate with ‘rights’, others do not. In considering the rights of an object, it is important to keep these distinct from the obligations people, museum staff and source communities, have to objects, involving responsible curation, conservation, and general protection (Ouzman 2006 and Knowles 2013). The aspect of plurality is important to keep in mind with these three rights as well, specifically with objects of Oceanic heritage. Throughout the region, the diversity of culture is well-documented, and this diversity is key to understanding Oceania (Hau’ofa 2008). It has been suggested by some scholars that when working with Oceanic topics multiple voices and ideas need to be encouraged and heard (Mikare 2011 and Taisi Efe 2005). This multiplicity is present and should be honored with the idea that objects have multiple life histories, agencies, or homes. For me it is easiest to make this connection through the idea of multiple homes for objects.

Though Ouzman (2006) does not spend much of his time discussing the right to agency, many other authors have written about experiences where they have seen objects exercise their own agency within museums. What Ouzman does offer us is the allowance for objects to utilize their own agency. Gell explains this agency as follows, “it may be supposed that whatever type of action a person may perform *vis-à-vis* another person, may be performed also by a work of art, in the realm of the imagination if not in reality— not that we are always in a position to decide what is ‘real’ and what is not” (1998: 66). Tapsell (1997) describes the emotional moment when Hari Semmens and the dog skin cloak Pareraututu, a taonga he had believed long lost, revealed itself to Semmens and initiated the process that led to her eventual reunion with the rest of her descendants. Kahanu and Andrade (2015) shared their experiences coming face to face with *akua hulu* feathered god images housed at the British Museum explaining, “what I experienced was a

profound sense, not of my looking at them, but of them looking at me. It was as if they were asking me, ‘Who are you?’ ‘Why are we here?’ ‘What are you going to do about it?’” (2015: 19). In this instance, the *akua hulu* asked Kahanu these questions when she came into its presence; it was not about her asking something of them.

If an object’s initial home is within a certain island, does that home always take precedence, like for the feathered god images found in the British Museum, meant for worship and not storage (Andrade and Kahanu 2015). Per the theory I am borrowing from Gegeo (2001), an object’s place, or I would suggest first home, should be recognized as distinct from the museum space. Because objects are not created in museums; except for some photographs, the museum can never be more than a space, or a second/third home for an object, if you accept the argument that both places and spaces can be homes. For Ouzman (2006) the right to a home is key and is defined as an, “object’s right to integrate with or reject its current surroundings. This requires understanding an artifact’s life cycle and biography as always in production” (2006: 282). This understanding comes from museum staff looking beyond an object’s provenance, though this information is by no means unimportant. It is through interactions with source community members, supplementing a museum’s documented provenance, that the object can be best understood as this knowledge sometimes can provide a distinct genealogy. While most provenance documents begin and end with the object, source community members are often able to connect older objects to the present through genealogical ties or cultural traditions. If not documented, through the written word or oral tradition, this information can be lost and with its loss, the object in question is altered.

There has been much theory produced about the nature of objects and collections. While it is very useful to be aware and able to engage with these academic theories, it is just as

important to allow for indigenous perspectives not only to inform the theoretical work of scholars but to be given the same respect. Unfortunately, this is an area that is still in its earliest stages as museums are just beginning to address their historically problematic policies and pasts as source community members are being welcomed into traditional museums and creating their own cultural centers. This chapter has covered some of the major topics that arise from these discussions, and explored the complicated nature of term usage within the museum world to describe what they hold. There are many ways relationships between museums and source communities can improve moving forward, but it is unlikely that these will all occur simultaneously. As museum professionals continue to shift their thinking and approach towards objects, specifically those in their deep collections, hopefully they will influence a shift in museum policies and procedures across the board. Many museums are attempting this shift at various levels and in various ways, and it will be exciting to see how successful they are, and what changes can be applied across museums more generally in their relationships to deep collections and objects.

This chapter has attempted to look inside museums, into some of their most inaccessible places, deep collections, to understand not only how they have defined and classified objects, but how they interact with, interpret, provide access to, and acknowledge their agency. Though the examples from this chapter have come from numerous institutions working with a number of source communities, my final chapter is dedicated to understanding how the issues raised here, among others, are occurring within these three specific museums with their Oceania-entangled collections.

CHAPTER THREE: VOICES FROM THREE MUSEUMS

The final chapter of this thesis demonstrates how museum staff and source communities interact with the deep collections of Te Papa Tongarewa, The Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum, and the American Museum of Natural History. Spread across the world, each of these institutions hold substantial collections entangled with Oceania. Similarly, these three museums are each engaging with their collections in ways that aim to increase access and allow for objects to exercise their own agency. Examples of distinctive projects being employed by each of these institutions, and the policies and protocols for access were assembled through in-depth interviews and my own personal experience spent in these museums and with their staff. I begin this chapter with a brief description of each institution and the collections I am highlighting. This is followed by a second discussion of terminology specific to these three spaces that shows how fraught and difficult term selection is, thus reinforcing my previous claim that this is an area that deserves more attention and scholarship. My arguments for access to collections and object agency are re-introduced through specific examples of how these three museums are attempting to engage with what I am identifying as the emerging dialogic and cultural center models for best practices introduced in the first chapter. Finally, the chapter closes with a discussion of important projects being run by each institution; it argues that it is through these projects that museums are doing some of their most interesting and important work with deep collections.

Te Papa Tongarewa

Te Papa Tongarewa the National Museum of New Zealand, is regarded by many, as at the forefront of community involvement and engagement in the museum world. Though only

opened in its current form since 1998, Te Papa has its origins in the 1865 opening of the Colonial Museum, later renamed the Dominion Museum. In 1992, the museum released The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Act that mandated “a shift to represent New Zealand’s culturally diverse society and reach a broader audience. Emphasis was placed on collections and the nation’s access to them” (Te Papa website). One curator explained,

“Te Papa has benefitted from a lot of activist work that happened in the 70s and 80s within Maori communities and Pacific communities, which were heavily influenced by Civil Rights movements that were happening in the States. So there’s been a chain of it, but I think because by virtue of the size of our country that the Māori voice couldn’t be swallowed up as much. Also in the 80s, we had a very popular watershed exhibition called *Te Māori* which heavily influenced and heavily informed how Te Papa was created, and how Te Papa curated its own Māori exhibitions. For the first time, curatorial authority was handed back to the source community so different elders were put together to select and talk about taonga. That has influenced Te Papa greatly. But in saying that, and all the different political movements that I was talking about, we also get stuck in time a little bit. Well, you know it feels like the only way to curate an exhibition is the *Te Māori* way. It’s really heavily influenced museology and how we connect with communities” (personal interview).

These connections to activism, both within and outside of Aotearoa, and the important *Te Maori* exhibit demonstrate how this institution attempted to part ways from its colonial predecessors.

While this aspect of the Te Papa Tongarewa’s creation is distinct from many other museums, its ties to that colonial history, still need to be acknowledge, particularly because many of the objects comprising the collections were acquired during that time.

New Zealand’s bicultural focus, is demonstrated throughout the Te Papa Tongarewa in many ways, one prominent example being the use of both Māori and English equally. Even its name utilizes both languages, in English, Te Papa Tongarewa translates to ‘container of treasures.’ Also because of its location in Aotearoa, the Treaty of Waitangi has and continues to play an important role at Te Papa Tongarewa, to the point where it has been given a place of prominence within the museum itself. Per the Treaty mandate for Te Papa, “the new museum was designed to host the Treaty as its principle object and model good practices that were

supported by a series of pedagogical structures (realized in exhibition form) that developed particular images of nation and identity. It was to promote the image of an embodied biculturalism that would present the museum as a product of a Māori-Pakeha partnership that ‘acknowledges the unique position of Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand and the need to secure their participation in the governance, management and operation of the Museum’ (Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa 2002b: 9)” (Message 2006: 169). Since its creation, Te Papa Tongarewa has been serving as a unique model for both museums attempting to follow a cultural center model and bicultural institutions.

The Pacific and Māori collections of Te Papa Tongarewa have their origins in the original collections of the Colonial Museum, but they have continued to grow over the decades. However, it was not until 1993 that the Pacific collection was separated from the Māori collections, a division that is not made at most institutions with Pacific collections. Per the Te Papa Tongarewa website, “As currently defined, the collection consists of about 13,000 items and includes both historical and contemporary material from the Pacific Islands, including Papua New Guinea but excluding Indonesia, the Philippines, and Australia. An exception is made for the Torres Strait Islands, part of Australia but culturally more aligned to Papua New Guinea.” The storage for each of these collections, including the other collections held by Te Papa, varies greatly. Though these two collections were my initial focus, I quickly learned I needed to broaden my view of Te Papa’s collection. Being located within Aotearoa, all the collections housed at Te Papa have Oceanic ties, and the principle of *mana taonga*, as defined in Chapter Two, used at the museum extends far beyond the Māori collection alone. These collections become even more entangled because of the disciplinary nature of the museum. One curator explained the disciplinary nature of Te Papa as follows:

“I think that the idea of Te Papa as a multidisciplinary institution is challenging, it’s kind of schizophrenic and the museum has one personality on one side and another on the other. I do describe it as this kind of schizophrenic identity. When Te Papa opened it was very interdisciplinary in the exhibitions it connected to science it connected to art connected to this and that. And that was one kind of mode of exhibition making. And I think when that kind of interdisciplinary practice happens organically it’s meaningful, but when it becomes forced or enforced then it kills it. And you lose the kind of strength and sense of integrity of those different sorts of experiences” (personal interview).

While this description focuses primarily on the exhibitionary practices of the museum, it extends into the deep collections of the museum and their disciplinary divisions, as many of the objects could have been accessioned into multiple different collections within the museum. Though Te Papa has changed significantly from its Colonial and Dominion Museum ancestors, the collection divisions that they used then remain, and it is only with acquisitions after 1998 that the collection divisions were broadened. However, for the most part, these divisions mean very little to those not working within the institution. As one curator explained:

“I think in a way it doesn’t really matter where it sits in a museum as long as it’s here. And once it’s online, I think when people interface with our collections online there are no collection boundaries. In a way, they’re freer than we are. They just come to the collections with an open heart and mind. I actually don’t know in the beginning if that part of its deliverability was really thought about. I’m not sure, it’s just something that seems to have really dawned on all of us that now there’s an even bigger gulf between us and the public in terms of those boundaries. And somehow we need to free ourselves up internally, which we’ve been talking about increasingly over the years. I mean part of it, maybe it’s structural and inherited the demarcations use to be even more prevalent in the past” (personal interview).

These divisions are still very real and for the time being the museum continues to operate within them.

While Te Papa Tongarewa contains collections spanning from the cultural to the natural sciences to the arts, I only focused on a few for my project: the Pacific, the Māori, the Human Remains, and the Textile collections. The storerooms associated with these collections are often shrouded in mystery not only to the general public but to museum professionals as well:

“I think sometimes within the museum people see storerooms as these locked vaults where things go to die. Or are hid away and I just try to say, no no no. These are rooms of wonder. For a lot of museums collections are seen as this burden and it’s just not true. They’re actually rooms of wonder. And there is all this magic in here that is available to the museum and you’ve got to see it in that way. And try and explain it to all the people that come through that we do lots of back of house tours, we have lots of researchers coming through, we’ve got the collections online, the museum is not just about exhibitions, they are one thing that we do. But there’s all this other activity that goes on behind the scenes and the material is available for all these reasons” (personal interview).

These ‘rooms of wonder’ are the main sites of research for my thesis, as they are where the deepest parts of the collections can be found, though not always easily.

Since these are places best known by those who work within them, it is through their words that I will describe them each. The textile collection at Te Papa resembles, in many ways, an enormous closet. It houses dresses, uniforms, shoes, historical and contemporary pieces, and an assortment of haberdashery. One curator described the storeroom as follows:

“The textile store is quite well set up and it’s easy to display things, the things are light, we can manage it quite well. The larger we get it’s quite tricky. And the stores are probably not as attractive, they’re more industrial so it’s good to have back of house tours. But if you promoted them we might get too many and might not be able to cope, and I think they sort of want to be able to up the amount of back of house tours and also potentially put a higher price on them. But you know my response to that is, if that’s what you want, to take it to a much more commercial level you actually have to really think the whole structure of...I think they’re \$10 a head and for tertiary education we don’t charge...seeing it not as just storage and that’s another complication we have is that people actually work in the stores and we can only schedule in tours when there’s free time and free space” (personal interview).

Another curator spoke about the space not in terms of visitors, but in the organization of the objects:

“So they are we’ve got rolling storage things that are in drawers as well as hanging and boxed. The collection manager organizes everything so we actually don’t as curators, unless there’s something specifically that we want to keep together. Recently I collected a pilot’s outfit, and when we collected the jacket in the pocket was a little notebook and few little things so the jacket traditionally would have been put in the textile collection and the notebook and buttons and bits and baubles would have gone into part of the history collection. We wanted those to stay together as an entire object. So usually where

something gets stored has more to do with the physical requirements of the objects” (personal interview).

The Pacific collection houses all the Te Papa’s objects from islands and cultures within Oceania, except for their Māori and Moriori collections. Though many of the objects are stored with others from their specific islands, a number are stored by type:

“Obviously the geographic divisions happen probably most formally in the shelving, the rolling shelves, and there are objects that are stored according to the needs of the type of object. So for example the ti vai vai are flat in long drawers and not folded up in boxes and that helps since we don’t need to unfold. Although some because of space limitations are in boxes, it’s not very many, but all our ti vai vai are in those big units as well as Tongan quilts. You know we have to work by type we have to store according to the needs of that type of object. So flags for example and fine mats are in the other big long drawers in the back they pull out quite wide. We have open storage along the walls, several walls, they display weapons from across the Pacific so although they look very similar they are in island groups by type. So you get all the Marquesan staffs on one and the Samoan weapons on the other wall and...and that open storage is just a really wonderful way to make storage visible, can you imagine all those in boxes, it would be terrible. So it allows us to have things on display and safely stored and I think that’s probably what makes it interesting for visitors is that you’re surrounded by objects you know weapons, I think we have around 3,000 weapons and not all of them are on the open racks but a large chunk of them...I think I’m not too sure what the thoughts were around that, but it just makes so much sense for us to be able to see right through and then obviously opposite the shelves are rolls of tapa and mats which are rolled around the big long tubes there so there are geographic groupings but there’s also storage by need. So all of our garments are on big platform that’s almost like a wardrobe some of our costumes and garments need to be hung” (personal interview).

The remainder of Te Papa’s Oceanic culture collections are housed within the Māori collection.

As the name suggests, this is where the Māori cultural objects are housed:

“We tried to tell them about the importance of having a space just for Māori. We run into these things like we’ve got a principle called mana taonga which means to give to somebody and to host them without any expectation of return, it’s to honor your visitor. We’ve got spaces around that can be adapted for that. But we were trying to push to keep our own space, but they’re renovating all the back of house. But the store rooms we call they’ve got two names. The first room with all the carvings and weapons and stuff which in English is kind of like a name for a sanctuary or resting space. It’s also an allegorical name that’s sometimes given to the womb, so it’s a place that gives us our first dignity, a place of protection and restoration. And the other room where all our textiles are held which in English is the house of weaving or the guardian so she’s kind of like the goddess guardian of weaving and childbirth. Her name designates that textiles room as not just the kind of content space for weaving but also somethings that’s been designated

as under her protection. Trying to acculturate or colonize this place from the inside out...oh it'll come back. Polynesians are good at finding spaces, we never needed walls. Look at all the old marae in like Tahiti, you just need the land. Just put your feet on the land, so we'll find it. Ritual spaces can be made up" (personal interview).

Unlike the previously mentioned collections, the human remains have, for the most part never been accessioned into Te Papa's collection. This space is largely a holding place for these individuals before they are returned to their iwi. A member of the repatriation team described this space:

"I think we've got enough room now because we did initially have two separate wahi tapu, one for the toi moko and one for the skeletal remains but we thought no they should be able to be together. So we've put them all together and they're all down here because some of them were up at Tory Street. They'll stay there until I finish the research, and we produce the report and then they go home. When we have that, after I produce the report, sometimes they will want to come and visit them, so then we've also got a space in there where we can present them to their descendants in a respectful manner and they can spend time with them. We are, even when we bring them home the whole thing about crates and you know it's kind of but there's only so much you can do so even, we're looking at even finding ways to put patterns on the boxes that they come in just to make it a little more culturally appropriate. I'm not sure about the way that they are boxed up because they have to be museum standard and all that sort of stuff but I mean for us, it's like they're not going to be in them forever, it's definitely temporary. So we're always thinking about better ways of keeping them and storing them and I think from a conservation perspective that's something that we really think about because we don't want them to deteriorate anymore so in a way these museum style boxes that they're kept in. But there are always other things that you can do. So it's an ongoing discussion that we have where we've got a balance out cultural versus conservation and it's like and the conservation's about caring for them too so it's sort of difficult but we're trying the best we can and we think they're in a much better condition then they were in before" (personal interview).

Each of the described collections evidences a distinct organization which seems to be primarily based on the needs of the collection. This is typical of most museum storage spaces, but the decisions to make the space more indigenous, whether through decorating the storage boxes or creating a distinct space in which community interactions can occur, are unique to Te Papa Tongarewa.

The Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum

The Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum is not only the largest museum in Hawai`i, it is also, according to their website, the “premier natural and cultural history institution in the Pacific.” Founded in memory of Princess Bernice Pauahi, the last descendant of the royal Kamehameha family, by her husband, this institution houses not only the impressive collections of the royal family but collections from across Oceania. These collections have been described by one staff member as being vast, not only in their representation of the region but also in relation to the types of objects and collections that they house. While the two main exhibition halls, Hawaiian Hall and Pacific Hall, have both been recently re-designed and contain many impressive objects, they contain only a small fraction of the collections held by the museum. Being located within Oceania, in Hawai`i specifically, and its distinct ties to the royal Hawaiian family, the Bishop Museum has a unique opportunity for close community involvement. Despite its origins and contemporary desire for community involvement, the Bishop Museum has played a much more complicated role in Hawai`i. It has been involved in repatriations and conflicts with some members of the Native Hawaiian community over various issues including ownership, treatment, and location of objects, among others, and the Bishop Museum is having to overcome or realign preconceived ideas of many community members. Within the museum their collection is divided not on geographic lines, but by academic discipline. This classification system is obviously a Western construct and reflects the Western history of the museum institution.

In recent years, there has been a push to renovate certain exhibition halls within the museum. A major part of these renovations was the engagement with community members to have a say in how the new halls would appear. Of the two major hall renovations, Pacific and Hawaiian, it was with the latter that the community could be most involved. Community

collaborators came from a wide range of backgrounds as the museum staff and the exhibition designers, Ralph Applebaum and Associates, wanted to work with those who had expertise in numerous areas. This renovation was received very well by the public and one visitor went so far as to tell a staff member at Bishop that, “for the first time Hawaiian Hall feels Hawaiian” (personal interview NK). For an institution firmly rooted in a colonial past in a place that has been heavily and painfully colonized to finally feel indigenous is a major step in the decolonizing and ‘waking up’ of that institution. It is only if people can feel comfortable and at home in a museum that they will return again and again. Since its creation, there have been Hawaiian and other Pacific objects housed at the Bishop Museum, but their presence was not enough for the museum to ‘feel’ indigenous. It was only by collaborating with these communities that change was brought to the institution, thus proving how important that collaboration truly is.

The American Museum of Natural History

The Pacific Ethnology Collection at The American Museum of Natural History in New York, New York, contains 25,338 objects per their online database. This collection is associated most closely with the famous anthropologist Margaret Mead. Despite its numerous objects, the Pacific Ethnology Collection is just a small part of the more general Anthropology Collection owned by the museum. Mead’s association with the AMNH began in 1926, when she first joined; she officially retired in 1969, but remained a Curator Emeritus until her death in 1978 (Edwards et al. 2006). During that time, she helped create, design, and open the Margaret Mead Hall of Pacific People, which is filled with objects from the Pacific Ethnology Collection and officially opened in 1971. Mead’s presence can still very much be felt in the museum today, not

only in the hall that bears her name, but in the work spaces used by museum staff. Her original office still bears her name and a cutting of a begonia from her garden is passed from Pacific curator to Pacific curator. The parts of the Pacific collection not on display are housed within blue rolling shelves, organized primarily geographically. The shelves consist of a combination of open shelving on the top half and drawers below. When all the shelves are closed, they resemble a large blue metal rectangles, the blue color being the only indication that the objects they contain are tied to the largest ocean in the world. Though the diversity of Oceania is immense, the museum has attempted to represent the entire region within its Pacific collection; a collection named for the ocean rather than the islands that inhabit it. The room itself, though large, has low ceilings and is often very quiet, despite the computer stations at the back of the room where the collection managers sometimes work. These collection managers care not only for the Pacific Ethnology collection but the other Ethnology collections as well. While the Pacific collection did not receive its own hall until the 1970s, the AMNH has been an important institution since its opening in 1869. The AMNH's mission statement is "To discover, interpret, and disseminate—through scientific research and education— knowledge about human cultures, the natural world, and the universe." Within this broad mission statement is a commitment to all the world's cultures, including those from Oceania. Though an admirable goal, the language of the mission statement deserves to be unpacked. In relation to the culture aspect, it implies that those doing the discovering, interpreting, and disseminating are not of the cultures they are attempting to learn about.

A Name Revisited

As previously discussed, I have chosen to use the word ‘object’ when I am unaware of a more culturally appropriate term. I raised this question of terminology in many of my interviews to see if there were terms being used that I was unfamiliar with and could adopt into my vocabulary. While I did not come across many new terms for these objects, in a general sense, I did note that many museum professionals have often pondered over the choice of their words. It seems that while certain words and phrases are still the most prominently used, I think a new term would be readily accepted by museum staff so long as it remains culturally appropriate. This was largely demonstrated for me by the acceptance of my own term ‘deep collections’ which I will discuss momentarily.

The most common term I came across, other than objects, was the Māori term taonga. It was reinforced for me that for something to be considered taonga it must have human connections. As one curator explained, “It comes down to that intrinsic association between people and a thing. A thing or taonga is important in its own right, but it’s made dynamic by the people who are still connected to it. By the people who made it, by the people who have been connected to it over time, it enhances its importance” (personal interview). While it is these ties that are incredibly important for a taonga to be identified as such, if the connections are not known this does not necessarily change its status as taonga. When asked about pieces of the collection that fall into this category I was told:

“it doesn’t define whether we treat it as special or sacred. It’s kind of like treating them like children you’ve adopted, I mean not to patronize them or condescend to them, but just to show the value of them. That they are looked after and cared for as if they were owned. We look after them as if we have our own tribal links to them. And sometimes you set up your own personal relationship with some of the taonga anyways, regardless of the genealogies. But there is always a deep sadness that we don’t know who the source community is” (personal interview).

This reinforces the idea that just because we in the present may be unaware of the connections a piece has, those connections retain their importance, with the hope that they will one day be re-discovered. Ultimately, the term taonga is the most popular term being used within Aotearoa, and it will likely continue to be used until it is replaced, which may or may not happen. While many of the pieces in the collections at Te Papa Tongarewa can be called taonga, the principle of mana taonga still influences the entire museum:

“We have a philosophy here at Te Papa that’s called mana taonga which talks about and refers to the belief that a taonga is precious on its own right, but is made even more precious by recognizing the connections that people have to that particular taonga. Past, present, and future connections as well because the human relationships to taonga will constantly change over time. Maybe more acute maybe dampen down over time and then maybe flare up. So it’s just understanding that there is a more dynamic relationship between people and an object. But that comes from a particular worldview” (personal interview).

Though specifically referencing a Māori world view, their location within a self-proclaimed bicultural country that places Māori on par with a Pakeha New Zealand world view makes it easy to see how broadly this worldview can reach. Many of those who are not Māori, have some grasp of the term taonga, and I would go so far as to say that every person in the museum has a familiarity with the worldview, despite not all of them having Māori cultural affiliations. The human relationships that can connect people to taonga can be created to other non-Maori objects as well, something most curators are aware of. The fact that these relationships can change over time is also widely accepted within the museum, as most curators have numerous stories they can share about how an object was suddenly changed forever in their eyes. Thus, the principle of mana taonga is easily applied outside of the Māori collections, though the term taonga itself is not.

Many museum staff see it as a term of convenience, which is not meant to devalue it in any way. For those outside of Aotearoa, to have a term of convenience such as taonga is deeply

desired. One person I spoke with at The Bishop Museum described a moment when they did choose to describe a non-Māori piece as taonga at a professional talk, and a staff member from Te Papa asked them afterwards why they were using that term because the pieces being discussed could not be taonga as they were not Māori, thus missing the important genealogical connection. They explained that they used it because in Hawaiian there was not a comparable term, though at some point in the past there must have been, “I guess in theory, Hawaiians, everything had a use so there wasn’t a term for some collection of things. Although they ended up becoming heirlooms, so by the time you’ve got the establishment of the museum, they definitely did have a sense of what would we call a collection of things. But I don’t know recall their being a term that they used” (personal interview). The Hawaiian terms *mea wai wai ali’i* (chiefly treasures), *mea makamae* (treasured thing), and *noeao* (made skillfully) fall short of the same breadth of pieces that can be classified as taonga.

Another term that came up during my interviews was *koiwi tangata* or human remains to refer to the numerous pieces that exist within Te Papa Tongarewa and have been repatriated to Te Papa from museums around the world. For many, the term object was most often used, but I found that it was often paired with something more descriptive. One curator talked about ‘charismatic objects’ or objects that can attract someone to them to learn more about them and tell their stories. Another curator described objects as ‘dormant volcanoes’ and explained:

“doing some research, talking to somebody, maybe reading something or you’re looking at newspapers online and you might see an advertisement or read an article. It’s the detective work. It helps you rouse the object and then it takes on such a rich, well different, life, it’s like a dormant volcano that’s got lots of potential and it’s just waiting for that moment to be warmed up and loved on” (personal interview).

In both examples the objects have always held within themselves these stories and the ability to make connections, what they require is for someone to take the time to work at uncovering those

connections from the human side. For example, a curator at Te Papa shared her first experience working within these deep collections and drawing an object out:

“I saw this really odd object up on the grate. It was like a long kind of mast with carved ends and I always wondered what the heck it was and nobody could tell me. I made it my mission when I first came in as a curator and finally had the privilege of working in that space to go and research it. And it turns out it was a cross tree from a niu. In the 1860s, there was a raft of different religious movements, prophet movements, among the Maori communities that emerged that was syncretic. So they were a mix of Judeo-Christianity, especially Old Testament Judaism, and Maori customary practices. It was a form of resistance, of adaptation, of survivance to endure this encroaching colonization and occupation. And there was one particular movement which came out of Taranaki, and their prophet, he had a vision where people would worship around this thing called a niu. Now niu is also a Pacific word for coconut tree, it's our word for flag pole. They adapted the naval flag mast, some signal posts, carved them and designated them as religious icons and worshipped around them. Through my research I found out that this piece was actually a component of one of those niu. The only one in a New Zealand museum. It's such a powerful symbol of my people's resistance. You know we talk about religious imposition and religious beliefs wiping us out, but a lot of the time our people used it as a form of agency and that's what that was about. It's never been on display. It's still just sitting on the grill, so I'm hoping to pull it out. It's been in the collection since 1906, yet it's never been out. I think because it sort of looks ugly, and it's a bit unwieldy. About 6 meters long and at its thickest is about the size of my thigh which is a good solid Maori thigh. At its narrowest about the size of my arm. It's a large piece, so the flag pole itself would have probably been very high then about 2/3 of the way up the cross beam would have been suspended and then flags would have hung off of it” (personal interview).

As I mentioned earlier, when I introduced my term “deep collections” throughout my interviews, it was often favorably received. After hearing it, many of them expanded upon the term and what it could mean at their specific institutions. At the Bishop Museum, the description of ‘deep’ was paired with the word ‘vast’ by one staff member. She described it as such because the collections span from the cultural to the natural sciences in addition to spanning across Oceania. At Te Papa Tongarewa curators compared the collections to ice bergs where what is visible in the exhibition space is dwarfed by what sits behind closed doors in the storerooms. Another curator talked about their depth not from a public standpoint but from within the museum itself. She explained that collections are deep because museum staff have limited interactions with them and do not know all that they comprise. At the American Museum of

Natural History both statements are true as well. The Pacific collection is vast in that it is not divided up like at the other two institutions, and the staff who work most closely with the collection are themselves unaware of everything they hold.

One curator at Te Papa Tongarewa speculated on how objects in a collection become almost lost in the depths of the collection:

“One of the reasons we have these deep collections is because of past curatorial practice. When acquiring objects, curators didn’t necessarily collect provenance. They might have been collected because of type, so we don’t have rich documentation around them. And when you don’t have provenance or rich documentation it’s really hard to make these objects sing in an exhibition. And because Te Papa, at least from a history team perspective, and arguably across all the disciplines. We have tended to prioritize exhibition making as our primary mode of interpretation of connection between our publics and our collections. And so when you’re putting together exhibitions you choose objects that tell great stories. You tend to often dig out some of the stories to excavate these objects from that deep collection status, you need a lot of time. And so sometimes, well you often don’t have that time to really do that archaeology” (personal interview).

As her answer illustrates, too often curators do not have the time to look into the deep collections and make the connections necessary to pull them from that depth. Especially when so much of a museum’s focus remains on exhibition. A museum cannot put an object on display without having the correct information about it, or else they may mislead their public. Thus, those pieces of the collection without the proper provenance, that were collected in the early days of the museum, may be continually overlooked when exhibitions are being planned. For objects to come out of the deep collections they must be carefully excavated by those conducting the research.

Another curator touched on the need for all objects to be treated equally, that no object is more important than another. If some objects are continually looked over simply because they do not appear as important as others, it only further buries them within the collection. She speculated on this and attributed this practice to the museum staff:

“This is just my opinion, I don’t know if it’s been documented, but I do think that the professionalization of all groups within the museum world has really helped the survival of objects that were quite marginalized. That said, it still doesn’t save everything, and it’s partly because we’re so overwhelmed, we don’t even know exactly what we hold. The collections are so vast, we are so exhibition focused that we don’t have enough time to research the collections properly. I haven’t spent much time in them, I’d love to, there’s still forgotten areas and under researched elements, not everything is on our database. There’s still a whole lot of stuff that floats, I call it purgatory it sits in limbo, we actually call it the back log officially. So officially we have a back log that has hundreds of objects if not thousands, all departments have this, all museums have this back log. And it lives in a very strange, legally unclear area, that hasn’t quite made it into the collections, but is of interest to us or needs to go back to their original donors. So you’ve got this weird mass of stuff that sits on the margins, the key things in your staff have to either be projectized to deal with hidden collections so that it’s part of their performance or they have to be passionate” (personal interview).

This ‘backlog’ of objects is certainly a deep and hidden part of museums, but because these objects have not formally been accessed into the museum I view them as separate from the deep collections this project addresses. The earliest part of her answer, about the professionalization of museum staff, and the need for museum staff to be either project oriented and/or passionate once again reinforces the obligation that people must draw objects out of the shadows. One curator at Te Papa shared her own experience with a neglected collection housed within the museum that she was particularly dedicated too:

I’m always interested in collections that are forgotten, are hidden, I’m interested in hidden history and when I arrived in 2000 there were these war posters just sitting in a pile on a pallet in a corner unloved. And they’d been unloved for nearly a century, I was shocked. The first WWI one’s came in around 1919 or 1918 the end of the war. The Second World War ones came in 1967 as one big lot from one person, about 530 of them. We had these two collections that were put together, that were just piled one on top of the other. It’s a huge pile, 700 posters, most of them were in these big massive cardboard sandwiches. I spent a lot of time in the archives looking at how did they get here, what happened to them. It’s really interesting the changing attitudes over time. I read a report from the Turnbull, somebody mentioned that they were dross. Just one person’s opinion, that things like posters were dross. There was this kind of opinion out there that they weren’t as good as everything else. At the time of the war they were admired for their emotional impact. Once they’d been on exhibition, so they traveled around the country in the early 1920s, but when the interest in the war died, which it did of course, they were just tucked away and forgotten. They were not as admired or treated with the same respect that other types of war objects were, or any other type of object was treated for the matter. They were just packed, because they were just paper they were just posters,

and they were low down the hierarchy of material culture. I asked Ross who started here in 1971, and who's dead now, and he told me they were just on a library shelf, nobody cared about them, and it's absolutely amazing to me that they weren't thrown out. Actually, I think some of them were thrown out, because a lot are gone, it's incredible to me that even some survived. I was so shocked by their treatment, and I felt that they needed some love, and my new boss at the time agreed, she loved them as well. Over the years, we chipped away at cataloguing them, and then we managed to get a little group together that was supportive we devoted half a day a week to working on them. Cataloging, photographing, and treating them, and now they're an incredible resource, they're beautiful, they're all online, they're used all around the world. So they've had a wonderful life ever since, and I've written two papers about them, and I go on about them to everybody. We re-housed them and we bought big drawers, they lay flat. That's the thing I'm most proud of. Rescue!" (personal interview).

Agency and Access Revisited

The topics of agency and access were discussed in the earlier chapters of this thesis to demonstrate their importance within museums. Since that has been established, I would like to spend a moment exploring how these three institutions are working to facilitate that access and to recognize agency, from both objects and people. Thus, I argue that the attention being paid to how access is facilitated, and how agency is deployed within these three museums is evidence of their importance for keeping museums, of all models relevant. Though much of my earlier discussion of agency was focused on an objects agency, it came out during my research that I had neglected the agency of indigenous people within the museum as well. As this thesis is centered on the relationships that can be made with objects, it is necessary for me to consider the agency that the people forming those relationships are exercising as well. I would argue that all objects have agency, whether they are well-known or hidden within the museum. Whether that agency is activated remains a different story. However, whenever I hear a story of an object being 're-discovered' within the museum and being seen in a new light, I view that as an example of that object's agency coming into play. The examples for these types of situations are

spread throughout this thesis, but I would like to take a moment to discuss a different example of an object's agency that existed in a different type of deep collection.

At the Bishop Museum in 2010 the exhibit *E Ku Ana Ka Paia: Unification, Responsibility and the Ku Images* opened and was centered around the only three existing images of Kū. One of these images lives permanently at the Bishop Museum while the other two are at the British Museum and the Peabody Essex Museum. This exhibit was the first time these three images were reunited in Hawaii since two of them left in the 1800s, and bringing them together was a powerful event. At a conference in Paris, where the British Museum Kū image was on display, a Bishop Museum staff member spoke about the desire to bring these three images together in Hawai'i. At her talk, a curator at the British Museum approached her about making this exhibit possible. She described the experience:

“it was not just that we are speaking to the universe, it's that you're physically speaking in his presence, in his proximity and then therefore he responds and is activated by that, by the chants of the people that were there for the conference, by the Hawaiian delegation that came, that saw, that appreciate it. So that begins this energy that has that purpose and intent but his agency can only be informed by our desires and expectations. In other words he can't come unless we call right? So we, it's the prayer said out loud, he responds, we're able to really get that has traction, we decide on 2010 because with consulting with the Hawaiian community there's the men's conference and it's the bicentennial of the unification of the Hawaiian kingdom by Kamehameha, so it's just like a metaphor for disparate you know, we're scattered but we can come together for this, it's even about diaspora, really and it's kind of like that the essence remains no matter how far from home you are or for how long you've been away” (personal interview).

In this example, it was not only the work of those coordinating the exhibit and the community group collaborating with the museum who made it possible, but it was the Kū figures themselves who made this remarkable exhibit possible. After the exhibit, the British Museum and the Peabody Essex Museum had their Kū figures returned to them. In the case of the Peabody Essex and the Bishop Museum, these figures are still on display, but The British Museum Kū figure remains in storage. These three figures, while each a part of various collections around the world,

form a collection of their own. A collection that has spent significant amounts of time separated from each other and from the Hawaiian Islands, their place of birth.

While the agency of objects has been discussed, I would like to return to the agency that individuals, in this case indigenous people, can exercise within a museum. Though traditionally associated with colonialism and colonial powers, museums need to become a welcoming space for source community members. Just because these histories exist, does not mean that indigenous people have always been silenced within museums, instead their presence has sometimes been subversive. I was reminded of this by a Māori curator at Te Papa who shared:

“I think a big thing to understand with your notions of deep objects, deep collections, is that indigenous agency within museums is actually really surprising where it pops up and where it might grow. I always use that image, they found it in volcanic vents deep deep under the ocean. They found a type of fungi that was growing, where it should not have been growing. It was like fucking growing on Mars, no oxygen, super hot heat, but it was flourishing. And indigenous agency in a colonial machine is like that. The places where you would never think it would thrive, it thrives. And sometimes we find it difficult to acknowledge it, because it's not a forest...so when it comes to deep collections the fact that somebody, a group might not have, the fact that it hasn't come on display, or hasn't been published about doesn't necessarily mean it hasn't been engaged to with...that is a form of kind of agency, of connection, it doesn't necessarily have to be exhibited in order to give it the full prestige that it requires. So just think about it there's the forest then there's the little fungi as well to try to differentiate, both are equally valid for the purpose of political agency. Sometimes people talk about museums sucking up indigenous agency, which it does, but we're good at surviving. We're good at pushing in places that people would never have suspected” (personal interview).

As the curator said, these moments of agency can often be overlooked because they do not present themselves as we expect or in obvious places. I am sure there are cases of indigenous agency at all three institutions that I have missed in my research, but this does not make them any less important than something as visible as the Kū exhibit. One way that indigenous agency can be thought about is where indigenous people can be found within museums. It is also important to highlight here that museum staff members can also belong to the same source communities that created the objects they now take care of. Some institutions, like Te Papa have

more indigenous staff than The Bishop Museum and the American Museum of Natural History, who not only have fewer indigenous staff members but also have them in the lower positions within the museum. It is also a reminder that object agency can operate in much the same way, growing in shadowy often overlooked places but working nonetheless. Agency remains a complicated issue. I realize I am only beginning to understand who and what can exercise agency and where they are doing it within the museum.

Agency and access can each be explored through how people can use their senses with museum objects. Museums have come to rely heavily on the visual, while the other senses are primarily forgotten. The sense of smell is often deadened in museums from the numerous chemicals being used to preserve objects, likewise taste is strongly discouraged due to the materials that can be found on the surface of various objects. In the case of musical objects, they are rarely played once they enter a museum; thus, they are no longer properly heard. Of all the senses, it is touch that museums have the most flexibility.

Though agency may be more difficult to recognize, access is a much more visible. Access can be seen in several ways, but I will be highlighting the most visible form that all three institutions utilize: back of house tours. These tours are offered to both academics, source community members, cultural practitioners, and any other interested member of a museum's public. Each institution, and each collection within said institution, runs tours slightly differently though the basic structure remains the same. An inquiry is made to the specific collection of interest, they are scheduled, a museum staff member, with the input of the visitor(s) selects the objects to show, and the 'tour' begins. While these major steps are shared at each institution, there is much flexibility in how they can each happen. I will attempt to give as much of an overview into these tours at each institution as possible. One curator at Te Papa Tongarewa,

shared how they facilitated a tour for a group of visually impaired individuals. Through using the new technology of 3-D printing, they could print examples of objects for the visitors to hold. As well they could handle certain objects, like fine woven mats, to feel the different textures.

A more common approach to touch deals with indigenous community members. Though the official museum rule is no touching, without gloves, this rule is often broken. One curator described this:

“Well obviously, the general museum rules is that there is no touch because it’s a risk. With mana taonga the principle of people that for whom the taonga belongs have the mana of the objects. That sometimes we go, that’s mana taonga, you know like when the maker wants to crease out something. And sometimes there are beautiful moments and for example there was a nose flute from a particular island in Tonga that probably hasn’t been touched by people from that island in over a hundred years, there’s real power is that. Do you see what it means, so there are times when that becomes very difficult you know like with a maker who has such a tactile relationship to their objects. Those are still theirs, you know they don’t go ‘that’s Te Papa’s.’ Particularly one example, is a necklace that is made out of mangroves and when you’re wearing it on your body it takes the oils of your body and it conditions it. Without it, it’s dry. So I think there’s also, and this is probably something we need to look into as well, is what the care of an object involves because you know if it’s not functioning how it would, how do we keep it” (personal interview).

The role of touch is clearly very complicated, and museums professionals often find themselves having to walk a fine line between respecting the object and what it desires with the rules of the museum that apply to all objects across the board. Touch is a very important sense, one that is often vital to the function of certain objects. Therefore, to deny it, is to deny the object something it craves and needs.

I suggest that the easiest and often most effective way to facilitate access and to recognize agency is through back of house tours, a feature of each institution. Before a tour can occur and the back of house collections can be opened, a request must be made. In some cases, this request is made very formally by filling out a form, but in other cases it can be as informal as a message sent via Facebook to a staff member who works with a collection. At Te Papa

Tongarewa many of the requests are made through personal connections, for example Māori staff receive many requests from their own tribal collections asking to see pieces of their taonga. They then go on to tell their friends with other tribal affiliations that they can also go see these collections. The Bishop Museum has a more limited staff for tours than Te Papa Tongarewa, so they are forced to be more selective and require a formal form to be filled out to request a tour. Once an individual or group has been approved for a tour, they will often engage in correspondence, either on the phone, through letters, or via email, about the specific interests for the tour group. The American Museum of Natural History does not have a formal form for a person to request a tour, though the Pacific curators must be contacted directly; this is most commonly done through email communication, for a tour to be arranged. After each of these requests are made, curators often coordinate with collection managers to set up a time for these tours. While the vast majority of tours are requested in advance, more spontaneous tours still occur at Te Papa Tongarewa, more than at the other institutions. One curator at Te Papa shared how one of their collection members offers these tours:

“My favorite type of tours that we get are people that just happen to be visiting. You know and our collection manager is great at this. She’ll be on the floor of our front of house and see some Cook Islanders at the café, and just randomly go, ‘Do you want to see the collection?’ I think that’s what we love doing making it more valuable. So there’s this kind of anybody that’s visiting, ‘can I see the collection?’ ‘Great!’ You know just so that there’s kind of an understanding that it’s acceptable...and you don’t have to go through red tape...I would say those are the moments when it’s just right time right place and you were meant to be there” (personal interview).

Every institution can facilitate a different number of tours, depending mostly on their staff numbers and schedules because no matter how open and accommodating a museum is for tours, a tour cannot occur without a museum staff member being present. It must be remembered that museum staff have many other obligations beyond offering tours, and these cannot be neglected.

In one of my interviews this balance was discussed:

“A number of years ago our general policy was to provide back of house tours and to honor every single request, there was not charge. But what increasingly happened was other things fell by the wayside. While we would all love to provide access to anyone and everyone at every moment of the day it’s just not a workable model” (personal interview).

Thus, museum staff are constantly checking their own schedules to try and make time for these tours because they understand their importance, though this is rarely a priority among their other numerous responsibilities and projects.

Each tour in each different collection at each different institution looks different. Most groups or individuals who make the request for a tour have an idea of what they would like to see. Whether it is a group of academics doing research on Samoan siapo (tapa) or people from Rapa Nui coming to see objects from their culture that no longer exist on their islands:

“I think one of the most interesting moments was a visit by a group, two families, and the kids were mildly interested in things, but the adults got really into very in-depth discussions about various objects. And one of those objects that really intrigued them the most, which is really interesting, was a fishing reel, a wooden fishing reel that had an octopus carved on the front of it. And for some reason that just captured their attention for a good 20 minutes they were examining it talking about because it was unlike anything they had ever seen. And these were folks who had actually travelled around the world to museums, two of them made a documentary” (personal interview).

This moment shed the fishing reel in a new light for the curator who did not expect this to be such a popular object, and it allowed the families to connect with an object that they had not encountered anywhere else. It is also common for people with familial connections to come and see objects made or donated to their ancestors.

While most these tours have specific requests, I found that most collections have a standard tour that they can offer for people with general interests or visiting state dignitaries, who are a common sight within collections. The objects that are often pulled out for these tours are some with the best stories that curators are most familiar with and can easily talk about.

Though still a part of the deep collections these objects enjoy more visibility than others in the collections. A popular stop in the Te Papa textile storeroom tour involves an old wedding dress:

“There’s one particular dress that was worn to a wedding in 1799. We know who’s wedding it was, we’ve got a locket with her photograph in it, we’ve got some love letters, we’ve got shoes so we can create a whole story, so it’s a personal story and people really respond to the people’s stories, not just the objects. Knowing who wore things is all sorts of great, it’s a special filled silk so it comes from a particular place in London, so there’s a great silk industry story around it as well” (personal interview).

At the American Museum of Natural History an item that is almost always viewed on these ‘generic’ back of house tours is a wooden *tekoteko* (carved wooden figure) that would typically be found on top of a *whare* (house). This *tekoteko* is Paikea, an important Māori ancestor. For years, he spent his time in the museum laying on his back on a shelf. It was not until a visiting group, Toi Hauiti, descendants of Paikea came to the American Museum of Natural History, that Paikea brought out from this shelf. A special stand was made for him to stand upon so that members of the group could *hongi* with him. After their departure, he has remained standing and has not returned to his supine position on a dark shelf. He is often found standing next to an entrance into the Pacific collection space. This position and his prominence have made him a popular speaking point for tours. In the Pacific storeroom at Te Papa, a popular a favorite object to show is a contemporary Tongan monomono:

“My favorite is the Tongan one. It’s a Tongan monomono, that’s blinged, it’s sequin pink. It’s my favorite thing in the whole collection. And it is got this got a big, they call it star of Bethlehem, quilting pattern that is patched, in sequins. I totally love it; it’s so Tongan. Tongan’s have a wonderful aesthetic that’s quite jarring sometimes, but there’s a quality, my sister has done a bit of work around it, around shiny-ness. We naturally are attracted to shiny, blingy things, and Tongan’s have gold teeth as a form of adornment and shininess. So for me that object is everything about the way I see the world. It was made by a woman in the states, and quilting I think monomono especially, really came out of the States. In America, it was kind of a supplement to tapa cloth because tapa cloth’s not made in the States, they have to ship it there. So to supplement because when you give cloth you give it in masses, so you give, and the more you give, the more generous is life. Women began quilting to supplement that. For me, it’s kind of this wonderful object that tells our story before and after contact. And I love it, it’s so blingy, it’s my favorite thing” (personal interview).

This monomono serves as an example of the Tongan diaspora, not only to the United States, where it was made, to New Zealand where it was sent as a gift for a young girl's birthday party.

Though these general back of house tours allow for objects to gain visibility to a certain extent, it is the specific tours that require museum staff to reach outside of their own knowledge base that are often cited as the most enjoyable and emotional. As one museum staff member compared, "That's what I quite like when we have back of house tours where people want something more specific because we have to work harder, and we don't just default because you can easily default to like 10 objects that you know really well and then some days it's like 'Oh my god! I don't know we had that!' And it's just like a drawer that that I pulled down or something" (personal interview). These moments of surprise, for both visitors and museum staff, are when deep collections can become the most visible. A person can open a drawer they have walked past countless times, to retrieve an object, unaware of the important pieces that are mere inches away. It is sometimes during these moments of surprise, that museum staff can come across previously unfamiliar objects. These tours are appealing just for this reason; there is the possibility of stumbling into something special that was previously hidden. A staff member at Te Papa speculated that for some indigenous Pacific groups, this method of interacting with objects is preferable to walking through a traditional exhibit:

"it's almost that they prefer that mediated experience without the labels and stuff. Or at least with somebody there telling stories. They prefer that experience but also they sense of going to a place that not many other people could go, that VIP feeling. It's very reductive that this a privilege that should be given to them. They're inheritors of these traditions" (personal interview).

This experience of a back of house tour, and the possibility of seeing something almost forbidden because of the way it is locked away does not happen without its own protocols.

It is most commonly when seeing culturally significant objects or taonga that these protocols come more into play as I did not find similar protocols in place for collections dealing

with historical objects or textiles. These protocols are almost as varied as the objects found within collection, they can depend on the objects or taonga being viewed, the cultural knowledge of the museum staff, and the cultural knowledge of the visitors. A staff member at The Bishop Museum explained the complex role of these protocols:

“I think this is all part of the issue of whether the community members, or the practitioners, are familiar with indigenous protocols. It’s always about time and place, appropriateness, and knowing how much to do, when to do or not to do or sometimes you just arrive there are you just take a moment and you don’t need to do all those things, sometimes it’s just, or just being reassured. Sometimes we have people who are indigenous but they’re not proficient in something, and the whole point is not to embarrass them that they need to know some sort of magical open sesame to get in. Because that’s not what we’re doing here, we don’t want to embarrass people because the whole point is not for them to feel ashamed. And so a lot of the time whenever I welcome people I said you asked to come, and I said you can, and we did this via email, or on the phone or via snail mail in a very traditional way you’ve already asked your permission and you’ve gotten approval, but if you need someone, I can announce this and say, I give you permission you know like you are invited and you’re under our protection... there was a chant on the door to get in, so if you didn’t know it, at least you could read the words and chant to get in. So I think after a while the paper came off the door, and people stopped doing it that because I think at the same time there were sacred things everywhere at this museum. I mean this is not saying that you don’t respect what’s there, but understanding how, having a more enlightened view of what protocol is when you do something, and then understanding protocol is used to negotiate a spiritual space, so you know, but you also create that space by doing a protocol” (personal interview).

This change in protocol over time and ultimate desire by the museum to make sure that the visitors are approaching the space with respect is an important role for museum staff, as they serve as a mediator between the objects and visitors:

“So there won’t be none if you don’t start none. You have to make sure, I don’t know why I said it like that, if you’re going to come up with that can of worms and open it, you better be sure you know how to close it. So we got to a point of the reverence, the respect, the appropriateness of how we behave that would be the thing that determines how we take care of things. Now if we were taking things that were human remains then it would receive a different set of protocols. A different sort of interaction because some of us here, we’re already part of the family, we’re not strangers we see them every day or they know us, they know our vibe, not to sound really hippie. Because it’s kind of like once you have the keys you’re here you’re part of this so you have a responsibility to maintain that. And then you’re the home team, and then when people come in that’s when you have to exercise some of those cautions or exercise some of those protocols and the

behaviors and sometimes they have to be actualized they can't just be behaviors, or you have to have the formality of chants, mele, or maybe even, we even just had somebody do "our father" and that was their protocol and we don't shame them because the intent behind them, behind something like that, because they're Christians, they're Christian Hawaiians, or their Christian Tahitians, we're not there, but that was there protocol to come in there are some people who would say well that's not appropriate but okay we're not a temple, we're not a marae, we are a place that cares for very important and sacred things but we're also a place that cares for every day things" (personal interview).

The chant on the door of the collections served as a possible protocol that could be followed, but over time it was removed. Now museum staff take their cues from their visitors, stepping in when they would like a more traditional protocol, but allowing visitors whatever protocol they feel is necessary. For the Māori collections at Te Papa the protocols remain the same whether the visiting group is Māori or not, these include rules such as no food and no touching or engaging objects without first asking permission, particularly for visitors who are not descendants. For those visitors who are descendants, they have different rights and do not need to ask to engage with taonga. In other cases, there is an emphasis placed on making visitors feel comfortable in the collection space. This includes not showing certain objects that may be considered taboo, such as pieces containing human remains, or religious objects if it's not the culturally appropriate time of year for that object to be viewed. However, this also extends to lighter and more 'fun' aspects. For instance, in the Pacific collection at Te Papa, staff members encourage visitors, especially younger ones, to take selfies or in one hilarious video, do the popular running man challenge in the storeroom, which can be viewed on YouTube. By allowing these actions the storeroom becomes, "a highly charged living space and we all have this kind of belief as a team the collection, yes they're housed in Te Papa, but they belong to our communities. So it's almost their right to see it" (personal interview). These 'rights' to seeing an object extend to the right to make the space alive, even if that includes some unconventional ways.

A final important factor to consider with back of house tours is the physical space of the storeroom itself. These places are built and designed with the intent of storing and keeping objects safe; they are rarely designed to facilitate access of large groups of people who are there solely to visit the objects. As a result, many storage spaces are small, with some tables, but very limited space, and orchestrating tours can be difficult. In some cases, such as the textile storeroom in Te Papa, the space is surprisingly well-suited for visitors. Much of the storage opens similarly to a closet, allowing visitors to view numerous pieces at once without having to remove said pieces from their place. In the Pacific storerooms at Te Papa Tongarewa, certain objects, like war clubs are hung on the walls, always visible to viewers, while their tapa collection is rolled up and suspended from the ceiling. Other pieces can be brought out from the shelves and placed on small tables to be viewed prior to a tour. At the Bishop Museum, objects for tours are typically pulled ahead of time and taken to rooms like the conservation lab, which allows for easier viewing. The American Museum of Natural History keeps all pieces contained within metal shelving, and tours often require the continual opening and closing of these rolling shelves, with a small table used for only a few objects at a time. Just as museum staff have priorities other than giving tours, so do storerooms have more important responsibilities, the protection of the objects. For a time, the Māori collection at Te Papa had a special room for meeting visitors, but during the renovations the museum is currently experiencing it was closed. In an ideal world, many of the curators and staff members I talked with hoped to one day have a space dedicated to visitation, a space that was culturally appropriate and a safer way for large groups to view objects. Presently, none of the museums have these spaces, but there is certainly hope for the future as access continues to gain popularity and importance within museums, the issue will need to be addressed.

Important Projects

Though all three institutions offer back of house tours, they are each also working on their own museum specific projects to further facilitate access in different ways to the collections. These projects, though institutionally specific, can offer insight into what may be able to be replicated in other spaces with a few changes. I argue that these projects are the best examples to demonstrate how each institution is individually attempting to engage with their respective deep collections. Ideally, it is through these projects that museums can continue trying new approaches to making these collections and the objects that inhabit them more visible. Some projects are very similar, the most important of these being the creation of complete catalogues for the various collections. Having easy to access records for all objects within a collection is the first step in making the deep collections visible. They may not have all the context, cultural and social that would be required for them to be placed on display, but it shines a light on them and allows people, whether they be museum staff, visiting researchers, source community members, or members of the general public to begin their own investigations into learning more about these objects. Most institutions are handling this type of catalogue digitally. The utilization of digital technology is being embraced more and more by museums, as it allows collections to be easily accessed and interacted with from any location. Due to this ease of access, it is unsurprising that it is with regards to the digital that museums are doing some of their more interesting projects, though it does force museums to think about what a duplicate digital collection could mean, a question that I do not have an answer for.

Digital Collections

At the American Museum of Natural History, the entire Pacific collection can be accessed via their online database. It includes all the biographical information associated with a specific object, photographs of the object itself, dimensions, photographs of the original archive pages, and in some cases researcher or curatorial notes. This database is easy to navigate and is a useful tool for anyone who has an interest in their Pacific collection. The collection divisions set up within the museum also exist on the online database, which is not the case at Te Papa Tongarewa. Though Te Papa Tongarewa does have many of their collections digitized, not all objects have corresponding photographs. Each entry is still accompanied by the object's biographical information, with additional information provided when available. The major difference between these two museums and their online presence is that Te Papa's database does not have any collection divisions. Natural science objects are mixed with pieces from the Textile collection and the Pacific collection and every other collection. The other major difference is that Te Papa has elected to not place some objects in their collection online, for varied reasons. Many of the objects not online are photographs, some because they contain photographs of nude younger boys and girls. Other images are not online because the iwi has decided they do not want their taonga or ancestor images online. The Bishop Museum also does not have images for all their online databases, though not for the same reasons as Te Papa Tongarewa. Their collections are also separated by the museum divisions. Many of the curators at Te Papa Tongarewa debated the positives and negatives of having a database without divisions. On the one hand, those divisions can be confining and limiting in how objects are perceived, when they are much more fluid. On the other hand, they can be difficult to navigate when searching for a specific object.

Ultimately, online collections, whether they be sorted by academic divisions or not, have been viewed successfully by museum staff. One curator at Te Papa Tongarewa shared about the decision to include all objects online, as opposed to just the objects that they have complete information for,

“it was probably six years ago when everything went online, when we first got collections online, a small portion of the collection was on and we tried to only put things online that were photographed well, that were all up to date, where narratives and summaries had been written. But then we decided to make it all available, warts and all. But we’re just continually adding, updating, and upgrading” (personal interview).

This decision to share a less than perfect side to museums is one that I have been fascinated with and wish more museums would adopt. There is an assumption that for an object to be displayed by a museum, whether in an exhibit or online, that object should be in pristine condition.

However, so much can be learned from objects that do not fit that mold. A staff member at Bishop Museum shared this belief in relation to a particularly damaged object:

“there’s one kahili that’s in there it’s beat up and you know it will never see the light of day just because the nature of the way that it looks. But it has a fabulous story that it had belonged to either it belonged to or it was in the possession of Nahi’enaena and she had given it to I think it was a missionary woman, if I remember correctly, but definitely a non-Native Hawaiian woman and she’s had it in her collection for a while. I think just with the age of it and the type of construction that they did for this kahili, it’s falling apart. There’s one whole section that it’s bare, you see the central shaft that would support the kahili but I told Marcus, it’d be amazing to see this on display. Just purely because there’s a story behind here this is something that Nahi’ena did she had given this gift, for whatever reason that woman had done something for her or helped her out or they were good friends or it was a gift maybe to bond ties or bond families together, who knows the full extent to that story but we don’t have a lot of things that are specifically attached to Nahi’enaena or some of the other ali’i’s and if we do they’re not the greatest pieces because they’re damaged, there’s missing sections. But it also gets me thinking, why are we only going to put the best of the best on display? Why can’t we put, we have these maybe for a short period of time, we put this what would be deemed a damaged or un-displayable piece and put it on display for a short period of time to let people know the reality of museums. That we have pieces that are not in the best condition, but we’re doing the best that we can to take care of them. I mean it just needs a little bit of cleaning cause some of the, especially the down from some of the feathers are really starting to ball up in there and deteriorate so it looks as though there’s dust bunnies in it. But it’s really just the down feathers, and it just needs someone to go in there and sit there and pick some of that stuff off. And I think it would be a pretty interesting piece to display.

It's the aesthetic, it's extremely powerful, it's that story line, the context, it's all those things that come into play. But it would be nice to showcase that because I think sometimes I worry that people have this idea that we have all these perfect things. And they're in the best condition and they're just perfect, they're great. No not everything is and I think we need to shed some light that not everything is perfect. What we have is what people are willing to give us or make us responsible for or have us take care of. And sometimes those pieces are extremely old or they're deteriorated and it is what it is. And there's a beauty behind that as well because something that probably should have not survived, has survived. I mean the environment is not a kind place, all these chemicals that are roaming around in this air are helpful for some things and detrimental for others. And in our case, we live in a tropical climate. We don't ever get a break from pests, we have pests 365 days. So for something to make it that far and in that condition is incredible" (personal interview).

This story and object beautifully illustrate the power that can come from objects that are viewed as not display-worthy. The digital collections provide an alternative to this problem though.

Objects like this kahili and others can be found online, with pictures showing what some may call their imperfections, but their stories are still powerful and deserve to be told. As well, there is a distinct difference from viewing a photograph online and being in its physical presence, the quality of the experience is completely different.

At the American Museum of Natural History the Pacific collection database is updated through an intern project known informally as 'Fifty Objects.' This project allows each Pacific intern to select fifty objects from the online collection database and to research them. After conducting research on the cultures of these objects, their archival records, and the physical objects themselves, the interns write up descriptions for each object, in an object label format. They work on these descriptions with the Pacific curatorial staff, and once complete they are added to the online database under researcher notes. These descriptions help provide a context for anyone looking through the online database. They also allow the interns to become familiar with the collection and share stories that the curators themselves have not yet encountered.

Museum Catalogues

While the entire Pacific collection from the American Museum of Natural History is catalogued and online, the other two institutions are still working towards this goal, likely because their collections are larger. At Te Papa Tongarewa, the originally named Pacific Digital Access Project of PDAP was a systematic project that went shelf by shelf through the Pacific collection to ensure that every object is properly registered, correctly stored, and photographed. All this information is then slowly added online, so that the online collections become more and more complete. One interesting approach the Pacific team is taking towards this catalogue is the inclusion of indigenous names into the online record:

“What we’ve been doing is giving it indigenous names to the objects. So that if we think about making that accessible, we’re also making accessible a kind of indigenous knowledge of that object...So for us it’s about decolonizing the database, but it’s also about doing things properly, doing it once and minimizing all risk and making sure the knowledge is accurate and appropriate too” (personal interview).

Though they have made much progress, the Pacific team, who has been working geographically and alphabetically through the collection has just reached Tonga. This project allows for all objects to receive their attention, and it offers museum staff the chance to become intimately familiar with the parts of the collection that have existed primarily in the shadows until now.

A similar project is underway at The Bishop Museum with regards to their objects from Rapa Nui. The museum is currently in the process of cataloguing and photographing these objects to create the first complete catalogue of Rapa Nui objects. Previous catalogues only contained the ‘best’ of the collection, like the collections that are the ones consistently exhibited, but overlooked most the collection. This project seeks to remedy that problem:

“every Wednesday we take photographs of the objects. We’re about an 1/8 of the way, but we’ve only been working for a couple weeks. There’s 768 objects so there’s a lot of objects so it’s going to be quite a large catalogue, but I’m also working with a local collaborator on Rapa Nui. So the idea is to incorporate an indigenous perspective as well in the text of this catalogue. And then to have the comprehensive complete catalogue of

holdings from Rapa Nui and use that as a sort of an example that we can follow for other sub-collections” (personal interview).

This inclusion of indigenous knowledge and indigenous names is something that the American Museum of Natural History could certainly take note of and ideally begin implementing within their own database. It is particularly useful to include indigenous names for objects as a searchable feature of the database and to not just have it mentioned in the researcher or curatorial notes. Until that happens collections, online or otherwise, will remain somewhat invisible and ‘asleep.’

Ho’omaka Hou Research Initiative

The Ho’omaka Hou Research Initiative is a project at The Bishop Museum. The idea behind this initiative is to see collections in new ways and use them to answer new questions, often taking some of the older collections and utilizing new technologies to discover these new answers. Several different projects have fallen under this initiative, like an archaeological project that sifted through bulk samples of midden from expeditions of the 1950s. This project led to a research affiliate identifying 4,000 different species of fish that can now be used to track dietary changes in that area over time. A very successful project that gave attention to a more hidden collection within the museum led to other projects as well:

“So because we have really detailed field notes about where these samples came from, we can actually track change through time, in terms of what people are eating. So that’s just one little piece of the puzzle, looking at what people are eating. We’re also working with researchers at UH Hilo to look at exchange and interaction and tracking that through the movement of volcanic glass. So that’s another component of the research. We’re also looking at the fish hooks and so as we started thinking about the fish hooks, we identified a couple of researchers who are located outside of Hawaii as sort of the ideal folks to re-analyze the fish hooks. And so instead of sending the artifacts, we thought well, we could actually improve collections management by inventorying them and digitizing them and scanning them and sending the scans to the researchers. So they can do the research remotely without having to take these collections out of their storage and put them into the lab and stress them out to analyze them. And so it’s sort of this integrated approach

where you start out with a research question or a series of research questions. And then as you're amassing all the information about those collections, we're updating our inventories, we're digitizing the collections, and we've also now created a publicly available database of these collections, of the fish hooks in particular" (personal interview).

The creation of the fish hook database was not done solely from the museum's research. Instead they collaborated with the community where these fish hooks were found to create this database. Through a contact in the community who served as an ambassador, Bishop Museum staff went and shared their research while inquiring what the community desired from this database. Their suggestions were incorporated into the final database design. This successful community collaboration with deep collection research set a good example for the museum on how to go about this type of collaborative project, and it has been used as a model for other databases.

Another of these projects is archival in nature. Unlike the fish hook project, this one was a spin off from a larger project involving maps and photographs of heiau's on Hawaii and Moloka'i islands. These documents come from the former Ethnology curator John F. G. Stokes and were made from 1906-1913. The documents affiliated with Hawaii island were published by the museum, but their Moloka'i counterparts were never published, and very few outside of the museum were aware of them. Recognizing this, the museum decided to try and remedy that:

"one of our collaborators who's based on Moloka'i she teaches and she has, right now she's on the board of directors for a new cultural center that there are plans to build a cultural heritage center and so we got in touch with her and asked her if there would be any interest on Moloka'i in making these collections available...And so we asked her if she, like we did at Kahu, if she would go out and be our ambassador in the community and ask the board of the new heritage center if they would be supportive of this project. And she did and they answered they would be. So we went out and looked for funding to create a database, and that will go live next month. Now we're still working out the specifics of that and how access is going to be handled. Because we did, we travelled to Moloka'i last month and we did a community meeting. We held, we facilitated a community meeting, met with the community and talked about the database and the collections and the ongoing research and they. There were some concerns about providing access to these particular maps. And so now we're working very closely with them to work out how we can manage access to this information, most appropriately" (personal interview).

This question of appropriate use is particularly important when considering access. How to strike the balance between providing access to those who have a right to the knowledge, but cannot make it to the museum to gain that access, and protecting the knowledge from people who may abuse it. This can be handled differently depending on the technology available to the museum. One popular option is providing password protected log in information that is regulated by the community itself, so that they have the power to control access to their cultural knowledge.

Open Day

Te Papa Tongarewa has one unique museum-wide initiative that neither of the other museums has yet to attempt, an Open Day. Since they re-opened in 1998, they have had two of these events, where all the museum storerooms are opened to the public all day. Throughout the day visitors have the opportunity to take guided tours of these storerooms, one curator described it as a chance for people to see the ‘treasure troves’ of the museum, with a ‘defined path’ through all of the museum’s collections at the Tory Street location. These tours began on the ground level of the main museum building with the archives then proceeded all the way to the History collections at the secondary Cable Street location. For some of the collections, like the Pacific and Māori collections that receive numerous visitors, this level of access was relatively standard, but some of the less accessible parts of the History collection saw far more visitors than their normal numbers. Many curators commented on the people who came to Open Day. There were far more men and children than usually frequent the questions, and the challenge of planning a child friendly tour had to be solved in some of these storerooms. Overall this was a very well-received event for both the public and the museum staff. One curator explained the excitement of an event of that scale:

“it’s always very special to take people back of house. There is that sense of going somewhere that is a special place, only a few people get to go in there. I think being able to share that space with other people, and you know they get excited, which makes you excited, which makes them excited. It’s good in that sense that sense of just revealing a bit more behind the scenes of what we do, so anything we can do to show what goes on behind the scenes is important” (personal interview).

This description of the cycle of excitement occurs in many back of house tours, but the sheer scale of Te Papa Tongarewa’s Open Day, takes it to a whole new level.

For some of the least accessible collections, like the large History collection objects, back of house tours are almost impossible because of the way the storeroom is laid out with many of the furniture pieces covered for their protection. Another difficulty faced by this collection was making their objects appealing to the tours. One curator described this difficulty:

“We have a lot of manufactured, mass produced, or technological object, so often some of that everyday stuff doesn’t really sing or have any magic around it. Especially if we don’t have any kind of provenance or storytelling for it, it’s hard to make it resonate” (personal interview).

This event was the first time that large numbers of the public came into many of these storerooms, and the level of physical access the museum was able to provide was unparalleled by the American Museum of Natural History and the Bishop Museum. While considered an overwhelming success by all the curators, the amount of work that went into coordinating this was substantial and required a lot of planning. One reason for hosting this Open Day was a reminder to the people of Wellington that the collection of Te Papa Tongarewa are there for them as a resource. However, this idea of ownership is complicated.

The Question of Ownership

Finally, I argue that the concept of ‘ownership’ within museums needs to be re-evaluated from the perspective of museum staff simply because an object is housed within a museum does not automatically determine that it is museums who ‘own’ them. This idea has always been

somewhat complicated within museums, and it becomes more complex as questions of repatriation are raised. Presently, museums ‘own’ most, if not all, of the objects within their collections, but the legality of how some objects have been acquired remains a thorny issue. There are also questions of the rights source community members can claim to various parts of museum collections. I inquired about indigenous Māori ownership and was informed, “there’s no sense of individual ownership...it was more of a belief in a collective ownership of something. In a post-colonial context, it becomes even more acute because people feel they have a stake in it and they should have a say over what happens to our heritage, our patrimony” (personal interview PC). This post-colonial context places the museum in the difficult position of having to possibly juggle multiple individual requests and demands on how objects are treated. These multiple perspectives must be answered by the museum in a way that prioritizes the safety of the object in question.

While source community members may have one understanding of ownership, those outside of the community can have a different sense of the concept. When I inquired about access to collections, and who has the right to ask to see certain pieces, overwhelmingly museum staff repeated the sentiment that the museum collections were for everyone. In the case of Te Papa, a national institution, they were literally owned by everyone in the country. Though a lovely idea, this idea is immediately complicated when considering collections not at national institutions, and collections comprising objects from indigenous communities. It would be presumptuous for me, someone with no connection, culturally or otherwise, to a community, to request to see an object just for the sake of seeing it. Most museums take this into consideration when they are receiving requests for tours, to ensure that access is being appropriately granted.

A similar point needs to be considered for consultation. It is not enough to go to one community member for their opinion:

“Now that museums are starting to, around the world, reevaluate their social missions there is more of a push to center a community that’s when you begin to see more of an investigation into what a collective sense of ownership looks like. So museums may engage with one person that they would usually see as a representative. So there’s an implicit understanding that behind that one representation comes a number of different voices. Which is sometimes problematic, which we know in a pragmatic sense, because sometimes that one person isn’t the appropriate person to talk too. Sometimes it’s just a matter of convenience for the museum that they deal with that one person rather than the 20 which would probably be better” (personal interview).

This point is of particular importance. At Te Papa Tongarewa, the best consultation is done with the Māori community, largely because of their proximity and the numerous Māori staff within the museum. Though The Bishop Museum does not have as many indigenous Hawaiian staff members as Te Papa has Māori staff, its location within Hawaii has allowed for more and more collaboration to occur. One curator described the changing community relationship to the museum:

“My own growth has mirrored the communities growth in terms of going from a museum as a place of hostility and animosity and from outright desecration of human burial sites and the knowing purchase of objects of questionable acquisition. To being a place of collaboration, cooperation, safety that tells not only a historical story but a very contemporary one engaged with Native Hawaiian visual arts” (personal interview).

Unfortunately, consultation with groups indigenous to other parts of the Pacific has been less successful at these museums. The American Museum of Natural History does not have the benefit of being located within a Pacific home land, and thus its conversations on collaboration and ownership appear much differently. That is not to say that there is no collaboration, simply that it is more project-based than collection-based.

However, at all three of these institutions, there have occurred moments where museum staff have been profusely thanked for taking care of collections that do not ‘belong’ to them. Sometimes this is in the form of an older woman from Rapa Nui expressing her gratefulness to

staff at The Bishop Museum for, “taking care of our things because we recognize that we don’t have a place like this right now on Rapa Nui” (personal interview). Or it may appear as students coming to see a Te Papa collection for a school project and then thanking the staff for allowing them this opportunity. In those cases, the museum staff often remind the students, “this is your collection that’s a resource that is here for you...where you can come and find inspiration” (personal interview). This gratefulness extends between the three institutions as both Te Papa and the American Museum of Natural History hold Hawaiian objects and both the Bishop and AMNH hold Māori objects. Because these three museums share a close relationship, the staff members have met and formed their own connections. This not only allows them the opportunity to visit the collections that they have connections too at these other institutions, but it also provides a sense of ease when you can trust the people looking after your objects.

This trust is something that each museum must demonstrate when they are receiving an object donation as well. The decision to donate an object to a museum can sometimes be very simple and other times be complicated. For family heirloom pieces, especially, it is important for everyone in the family to approve of the donation. The museum of course does its part to show that their objects would be cared for, but this is often still an emotional experience. One curator at Te Papa described this relationship to donations as co-curated:

“That’s the nice thing with the history collection, much of it’s donated so the public are frequently, they’re the ones thinking this item that we’ve got is worthy of the national collection, I’m going to bring it. So it’s almost a co-curated, the most co-curated part of the collection” (personal interview).

After these objects enter the collection it is not uncommon for family members to come back and visit with them. While I encountered many stories from curators about emotional moments they experienced when descendants came in contact with the objects of their ancestors, I was especially touched by one story shared from Te Papa Tongarewa:

“I collected some items related to a woman who was a girl guide, like a girl scout, in her youth, including an amazing blanket with all her little badges, and one of the bags she took to camp, cute things associated with girl guiding. I think she had a terrible accident, and the materials were donated to the museum by a friend. A couple of years later, the daughter of the woman who who’s objects they were, got in touch and wanted to visit and see her mother’s girl guiding objects. I thought, ‘Yeah we like descendants and families to come in and see things.’ They were very ordinary, dare I say, objects but that was incredibly moving for the daughter, and she broke down. I think there were lots of unresolved issues, she maybe just she hadn’t said some things to her mother that she regretted that she hadn’t, and to connect to her mother through these objects was a very powerful moment for her. It was quite hard for me because I wanted to give her the space, but you can’t say anything because you absolutely cannot really understand or be moved in the same way. I mean I felt some empathy for her, but you just have to stay with the moment. I don’t know if she wanted to touch anything, I can’t remember but in those circumstances, if she had wanted to touch something we would have said, ‘Yeah, you don’t need to put those yucky gloves on.’ Touching it, being physically close through that proxy object, I think it’s very powerful. I cannot remember if she wanted to or not as I said, had she wanted to it would have been perfectly acceptable. So that was a very special kind of visit actually. There’s a lot that was unsaid, you know we didn’t talk too much about personal details or personal histories or anything so it was all kind of about the proximity to the personal objects. I’d forgotten about that so thank you for asking ” (personal interview).

This experience shows how though many times museum staff can learn more about objects during these visits; other times, it is more important for descendants to just have the time with their objects. It is these examples of interactions that demonstrate how much access can positively impact visitors, and whenever possible should be facilitated.

When taonga and other tribal objects are donated to the museum, there are protocols in place to facilitate the exchange:

“We have set up a number of different collection management agreements with various families, tribes, tribal groupings, or individuals where they helped, they have some say into how we manage the collection. With, in particular the collection around their taonga. So things like if researchers can access them, if people want to take photographs of them, if we want to put them on display, in a publication, we go back to that person. We hold legal title but we consider them to hold moral authority over them. So they have a say in how its used. Down to details like they might review the label text, they might review the people who have access to it, there’s different layers to it. So that’s all access around that stuff. If it gets to go overseas, if we get a loan request to send it overseas they’ll have a say in that. So its just making room for that person, that group, that tribe to have some sense of agency within the museum spaces” (personal interview).

Te Papa Tongarewa appears to be the only institution from these three that utilize something along these lines. These agreements allow for ownership to stay partially with the iwi or family as they have a say in the life that this piece will lead inside the museum. This sometimes includes being loaned back out to the family for use at important occasions. It is this relationship that truly sets Te Papa apart from other institutions. This all occurs on a family by family and object by object basis for the museum. Sometimes a museum staff member will accompany the taonga when it is loaned out because, “our job is to safeguard the taonga, not just its physical safety, but all facets of safety we have to look after it, in a way that isn’t rude to the people so we’re still operating within the cultural paradigm” (personal interview). Some of these relationships though have existed for so long and have gone so well that taonga can be loaned out without an accompanying museum professional.

Findings

Though all three of these featured institutions have colonial origins, they are all moving, in varying degrees, past these histories. After acknowledging these pasts, a main step in addressing these histories, is actively bringing indigenous source communities into institutions. This is especially important to remedy the way these communities have been treated by museums throughout time, where they were viewed only as a place to collect from. The current interactions occurring between museum staff and source community members differs greatly between the three museums referenced in this thesis. Te Papa Tongarewa provides the most physical access to these communities, due in part to their geographic location and staff numbers, followed by The Bishop Museum. The American Museum of Natural History is situated quite

differently, interestingly it has the most digital access to their collections, followed by Te Papa Tongarewa and then The Bishop Museum.

I have found that an institution's geographic location influences how much access can be facilitated to the deep collections, as the further separated a museum is from source communities, the less opportunity for access exists. Thus, Te Papa Tongarewa has the best access relationships with the Māori communities, while The Bishop Museum has been actively working on improving their relationships to Native Hawaiian communities. In contrast, due to its location in New York, the American Museum of Natural History relies most heavily on diasporic communities and tourists to create relationships with Oceanic source communities. Strong connections between museum staff and source and descendant communities, though not a requirement, makes access much easier to facilitate and maintain. These relationships also lead to opportunities for collaboration that can assist museum staff in excavating their deep collections.

My observation of the lack of scholarly attention being paid to deep collections was interestingly complemented by all I interviewed who shared a sense of the need to better engage these objects. It is largely this passion, from museum staff, that drives many of the current and recent projects that have been centered around these parts of the collection. The term "deep collections" was very well received by those in the museum, and the existence of these collections was well-known. There also existed a consensus that much work still needs to be done to make deep collections more visible, though this is unfortunately not a priority for many museums. The priority for most museums remains exhibition, and many museum staff talked about the need to collect objects that will be used for future exhibitions so that the collections 'work' for the museum. However, this current focus, overlooks the significant deep collections

that deserve more attention than they have been given. Collection practices in these three museums have rarely been comprehensive, and many bursts of collecting throughout the years have led to an accumulation of objects that may no longer fit with the museum's current mission statement. However, the fact remains that at one point in time these objects were deemed important enough to collect, and they should not be ignored simply because times have changed.

Through my research at these three institutions, I have realized that for their individual deep collections to be made visible and accessible, museums must operate in ways that are specific to their intuitions and context. Each museum has distinct deep collections that require specific attentions. It appears that the best way to begin bringing communities into the deep collections, is to start with the community that the museum has the most access to, whether that be physical proximity to the original source or the simple presence of community members near the museum. From there, other community interactions can be established and the applicable protocols developed and implemented. It is often the protocols of the museum staff member's individual culture that is used as the default, but as members from different communities access these collections, the applicable protocols for each culture can be developed and deployed when appropriate. It also deserves mentioning that the answer to opening deep collections is not as simple as implementing open storage for the museum. This concept involves making all the storage space visible, where objects are not 'hidden' within cabinets or crates. Though a very intriguing option for storage, it is not the best way for museum staff and by extension, source community members to become aware of all that museums hold. This is because open storage does not always consider that some parts of cultural collections and the knowledge associated with them should not be made available to everyone.

Even though individual projects are not enough to make deep collections visible, some of the most exciting work in museums is being done through the creation of digital and online databases. When populated with applicable knowledge from source communities to contextualize the object, with indigenous names, the amount of access and visibility is unparalleled. There certainly needs to be some consultation and collaboration with descendant communities to determine what knowledge they are willing to share and which objects are inappropriate to be so visible. The ability to design these databases, though expensive, offers numerous opportunities to museums and communities.

While projects are the best way museums have been excavating their deep collections, they are not sufficient. Museums will need to specifically mandate that deep collections be made visible, first to museum staff and then to descendent communities. If museum staff are unaware of all the objects under their care, they cannot properly serve them, and source communities may never know what resources they have inside walls of the museum. Currently, most projects dealing directly with the deep collections are driven by the current staff members working with those collections, and they are not driven by any museum-wide mandate. By creating a mandate specifically regarding working in deep collections, these museums would be able to not only increase the amount of work being done to make these collections visible, but it would also make it a permanent goal for the museum. Without something like this, the museum and its collections risk remaining in the shadows after passionate staff members leave the museum.

CONCLUSION

Museums have long been places of scholarly attention, and through documenting the material relationships that exist within their walls I argued here that their deep collections were largely neglected despite the powerful waves of change touching exhibit and front collections and museum spaces. These collections are significant first because of their size, and second because of the material relationships that exist between the objects within them, community groups, and museum staff members. These relationships are a particularly useful way for engagement to occur between museums and source communities, but this cannot occur without these collections first being made accessible and a priority for community engagement. While it is clearly important for museum staff to be aware of their deep collections, so that they can properly care for the collections, it is equally important for source communities to be aware of the objects in these collections.

The importance of terminology within museums should not be underestimated. Language matters in museums and their collections just as much as it does outside their walls. Though I came across a number of terms being used to describe the pieces that comprise museum collections, I continued to use the term with which I am most familiar. It is my hope that more culturally specific words in indigenous languages, beyond the Māori term ‘taonga,’ will in the future become used within museums institutions and collections as and when appropriate. While I struggled with terminology, I was pleased to see the term I introduced ‘deep collections’ be readily accepted throughout my interviews and to hear it used in consultants answers and descriptions. I was reminded that the descriptor ‘deep’ can be easily paired with the word ‘vast’ to also highlight the breadth represented in museum collections or their Oceanic context

reminding us of the work of Hau'ofa (2008) or other leading voices across Pacific Islands studies and regional museum literature. That acknowledged, I believe my phrase 'deep collections' to be a useful addition to the terminological toolkit for use by or with museums and museum scholars.

This access will be mutually beneficial to both museums and source community members, particularly when it occurs within the deep collections. Through these interactions, museum staff have the opportunity to learn more about objects with which they are unfamiliar, while community members have the chance to engage with objects associated with their ancestors. This access allows relationships to be built between these two groups who, in many cases, have fraught and painful histories. It is the objects that bring these individuals and groups together, and through my research I encountered a number of stories from museum staff that illuminated often-powerful moments. Objects can close the gaps between source community members and museum staff. Not only do these moments leave a lasting impact on the individuals involved, but the objects play an active role as well in those interactions.

Objects are not passive within the museum, even when they exist in the deep collections. Objects have the ability to speak and communicate with us. Sometimes you just need to listen or have an interpreter. In the meantime, objects wait within the shadowy back rooms, storage systems, and sometimes literally unopened drawers and boxes. In these contexts they wait to be active agents in their own lives. This agency is most easily seen when individuals comes across an object they were previously unfamiliar with and find themselves drawn to it, which often leads to that object being excavated from the deep collections. Though moments like these can occur with source community members, it is most often through museum staff dedicated to this visibility that they are facilitated. Unless museum staff are actively giving attention to the deep

collections, source communities will have a difficult time gaining access to objects in the deep collections to form their own relationships with them.

Most of the work done within the deep collections has been primarily driven by the passion of the museum staff members, as the institution remains focused on its exhibitionary side. Until deep collections become a priority for museums on par with exhibitions, they are threatened to remain overlooked. It is both the exhibitions and the deep collections that are of importance for the future of the museums. As museums enter this moment of new museology that is more focused on community engagement, the cultural center model is being particularly offered as an alternative for future museums. Based on my interviews, observations, and own primary experience, I assert that there are measures, centered around deep collections, being taken by the three museums featured in this thesis that will keep them relevant without transitioning towards becoming a cultural center.

These measures include back of house tours, complete museum catalogues, digital collections and databases, and other specific projects. Though similar, each of these examples is utilized slightly differently in each museum, and overall serve to illuminate deep collections while offering a space for material relationships to be created and fostered. While it is through digital collections that museums can offer the most access, spending actual time in the physical collections is just as important. Projects that bring communities into the museum storerooms will better community engagement can be facilitated. However, the ability to have physical access is heavily dependent on the geographic location of the museum, in relation to source communities, and the availability of the museum staff members.

Though the three institutions that I highlighted in this work are all well-known throughout the region for their substantial Oceanic collections, there are Oceanic collections

spread around the world. In many ways, these three museums are at the forefront of this new moment in museology, but many of the stories that came out of them, especially those surrounding objects, could have come from any of these collections. Museums and their deep collections are important resources for anyone attempting to study anything about Oceania. They are arguably even more important for people who find their home within the region given the profound shifts in cultural knowledge and practices over the last centuries and given the colonial history of the region (Thomas 1991). Though historically they have often been examples of the white tower of academia, the shift occurring within museology and within Pacific Island studies is, for the first time, opening many doors and rooms for the communities regional museums serve.

Hopefully the examples set by these three museums will be emulated not only across the globe in comparable institutions, including not only museums but libraries and archives, as source community members are given access to places from which they have historically been excluded. This serves as a reminder of the wealth of knowledge that exists within deep collection just waiting to be revealed. The stories I selected to share here were important to the museum staff members that I interviewed; they represent the material relationships that were a focus of this thesis. While these stories and thesis as a whole was dedicated to museums, the idea of deep collections and the accompanying issues of access and agency can also be applied to libraries and archives in a useful and meaningful way.

Finally, through this research I was made aware of what may be some of the deepest collections in museums: negatives of photographs. These objects are particularly inaccessible not just because of their location within the museum, but because of the medium itself. Many of the negatives housed in museums have never been developed or even viewed, so the images remain

largely unknown to museum staff. They are a unique example of deep collections where an immense amount of work needs to be done. Unfortunately, I was not able to explore this in greater detail in this thesis.

Early in this thesis I described the two museum models that have gained popularity in this moment of new museology: the cultural center model and the dialogic museum model. While only Te Papa Tongarewa has attempted to implement one of these models, the cultural center model, none of these three featured museums have completely modeled themselves on either of these examples. Though both these models attempt to solve some of the problems plaguing museums, and they both highlight the need for community collaboration, neither are better for deep collections than the traditional Western museum model. This is largely because they remain focused on exhibitions and not on the needs of their deep collections. While I do not have a new museum model to introduce that solves this problem, I do have some theoretical and practical suggestions for ways that deep collections can be prioritized within either of these two new models or in museums, like the three discussed here.

I return to my previous claim that museums, and the people connected to them, need to be ‘woke’ at every level and in every field and aspect of their lives. In the absence of this “wokeness” (awakening), all other changes will be that much more difficult to undertake. It is especially key to be woke in a period in which the effects of colonialism continue to hold sway over colonial or post-colonial institutions including regional museums. How can we expect people to be a part of the waking up and warming up of objects in and with deep collections if they are not awake themselves? It is not much of a stretch to see deep collections as places that are filled with cold, sleeping, objects, but just as people can become ‘woke’ so can objects as they are warmed up. The process of warming up depends largely on the objects and the person doing the warming

including appropriate cultural protocol and community specific practices. It's always best when the culturally appropriate protocols can be deployed, but this is difficult as those doing the warming up may not be holders of that knowledge. However, this is where the agency of objects can come into play as they are active participants in this waking and warming up. These moments of warming, particularly when it is a source community member engaged in the process are poignant reminders of complex issues of ownership. Without the opportunity to form connections and relationships to their living descendants, objects in deep collections are temporarily disembodied. It is through the forging of these connections that they become embodied, awake, and warm.

I would also like to make a few practical suggestions as well for museums interested in excavating their deep collections and promoting community engagement and access: the creation of a complete catalogue of all the objects in a museum collection, ideally with the names for objects included in their original languages; likewise, providing contextualizing information on the databases would be helpful, but when possible, this should be done in collaboration with source communities; there is a need for museums, as whole institutions, to not only acknowledge any colonial and painful histories that they may have, but to work to remedy them; finally, these institutions also need to create museum-wide mandates to ensure that no matter what the desires of the curator or museum staff member, deep collections will remain important. When museum staff, objects, and source and descendant communities come together in deep collections, all the senses should be engaged, whenever possible, as the visual has been too heavily relied upon in the modern museum. Museums house more things than we may ever know, but those objects deserve our attention and the chance to emerge from the deep collections where they currently live.

Just as this thesis began with an object, it seems fitting for it to end in a similar fashion. I have spent the last few years thinking about, and when possible, spending time with the Kauri heart housed at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, whether in person or through images online. In many ways, this object was my first introduction to deep collections, long before I was using that phrase, and it remains my personal best example to describe the power held within these collections. This small Kauri heart made its way from Aotearoa to New York City in the early 1900s, and over a century later I made the same journey in reverse motivated by that same piece of Kauri gum. Objects in deep collections are powerful and have important stories to tell. They have the ability to impact those who interact with them and the museums where they currently reside. These objects deserve scholarly, source community, and institutional attention.

WORKS CITED

- Alivizatou, Marilena. 2011. "Intangible Heritage and Erasure: Rethinking Cultural Preservation and Contemporary Museum Practice." *International Journal of Cultural Property* 18 (1): 37–60.
- Allen, Anne E., and Deborah Waite, eds. 2014. *Repositioning Pacific Arts: Artists, Objects, Histories: Proceedings of the VII International Symposium of the Pacific Arts Association, Christchurch, New Zealand*. Canon Pyon: Sean Kingston Publishing.
- Andrade, Maile, and Noelle M.K.Y. Kahanu. 2015. "A Journey of Encounters and Engagement." In *Royal Hawaiian Featherwork: Na Hulu Ali'i*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Appadurai, Arjun, ed. 1986. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Asma, Stephen T. 2001. *Stuffed Animals & Pickled Heads: The Culture and Evolution of Natural History Museums*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bachelard, Gaston. 1964. *The Poetics of Space*. New York: Orion Press.
- Ballard, Chris. 2014. "Oceanic Historicities." *The Contemporary Pacific* 26 (1): 96–124. doi:10.1353/cp.2014.0009.
- Ballard, Chris. 2014. "Technologies of Transmission." *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 4 (1): 511–15. doi:10.14318/hau4.1.034.
- Bell, Joshua A. 2012. "Museums as Relational Entities: The Politics and Poetics of Heritage." *Reviews in Anthropology* 41 (1): 70–92. doi:10.1080/00938157.2012.651072.
- . 2015. "A View from the Smithsonian: Connecting Communities to Collections." *Practicing Anthropology* 37 (3): 14–16.

- Bell, Joshua A., and Haidy Gesimar. 2009. "Materialising Oceania: New Ethnographies of Things in Melanesia and Polynesia." *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 20 (1).
- Benjamin, Walter. n.d. "Unpacking My Library: A Talk About Book Collecting." In *Illuminations*, translated by Harry Zohn. New York: Schocken Books.
- Bennett, Tony. 1995. *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*. Culture: Policies and Politics. London; New York: Routledge.
- Berger, Arthur Asa. 2014. *What Objects Mean: An Introduction to Material Culture*. Second. California: Left Coast Press, Inc.
- Berger, Peter L., and Thomas Luckmann. 1966. *The Social Construction of Reality; a Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. 1st ed. Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday.
- Bolton, Lissant. 1997. "A Place Containing Many Places: Museums and the Use of Objects to Represent Place in Melanesia." *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 8 (1): 18–34.
- Bouquet, Mary. 2000. "Thinking and Doing Otherwise: Anthropological Theory in Exhibitionary Practice." *Ethnos* 65 (2): 217–36. doi:10.1080/00141840050076905.
- Brady, Miranda J. 2009. "A Dialogic Response to the Problematized Past: The National Museum of the American Indian." In *Contesting Knowledge: Museums and Indigenous Perspectives*, 133–55. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Busse, Mark. 2008. "Museums and the Things in Them Should Be Alive." *International Journal of Cultural Property* 15 (2): 189–200.
- Byrne, Sarah. 2013. "Exposing the Hearth of the Museum: The Archaeological Sensibility in the Storeroom." In *Reassembling the Collection: Ethnographic Museums and Indigenous Agency*. Santa Fe, NM: School for Advanced Research Press.

- Chatterjee, Helen, Sally MacDonald, David Prytherch, and Guy Noble, eds. 2008. *Touch in Museums: Policy and Practice in Object Handling*. English ed. Oxford, UK; New York, NY: Berg.
- Clifford, James. 1994. "Collecting Ourselves." In *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, 258–68. London: Routledge.
- . 1997. *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Clunas, Craig. 2004. *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China*. Paperback ed. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Coote, Jeremy. 2016. "Māori Fishhooks at the Pitt Rivers Museum: Comments and Corrections." *Tuhinga* 27: 10–20.
- Daley, Paul. 2015. "Encounters Exhibition: A Stunning but Troubling Collection of Colonial Plunder." *The Guardian*, November 26, sec. Art and design.
<http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/nov/27/encounters-exhibition-a-stunning-but-troubling-collection-of-colonial-plunder>.
- . 2016. "Indigenous Treasures, Briefly on Loan to Australia, Are about to Be Taken Away – Again." *The Guardian*, March 22, sec. Australia news.
<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/postcolonial-blog/2016/mar/22/indigenous-treasures-briefly-on-loan-to-australia-are-about-to-be-taken-away-again>.
- Drake, Maile T. 2007. "Life in the Pacific of the 1700s: The Cook/Forster Collection of the George August University of Gottingen (review)." *The Contemporary Pacific* 19 (1): 342–43.

- Duncan, Carol. 1991. "Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship." In *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, 88–103. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- . 1994. "Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship." In *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, 279–86. London: Routledge.
- Edwards, Elizabeth, Chris Gosden, Ruth B. Phillips, and ebrary, Inc, eds. 2006. *Sensible Objects: Colonialism, Museums and Material Culture*. English ed. Wenner-Gren Center International Symposium Series. Oxford; New York: Berg.
- Engels-Schwarzpaul, A.-Chr, and Michael A. Peters. 2013. *Of Other Thoughts: Non-Traditional Ways to the Doctorate: A Guidebook for Candidates and Supervisors*. Springer Science & Business Media.
- Fairweather, Ian. 2004. "Anthropology, Postcolonialism, and the Museum." *Social Analysis* 48 (1): 1–4.
- Fienup-Riordan, Ann. 2003. "Yup'ik Elders in Museums: Fieldwork Turned on Its Head." In *Museums and Source Communities: A Routledge Reader*, 28–41. London: Routledge.
- Gegeo, David Welchman. 2001. "Cultural Rupture and Indigeneity: The Challenge of (Re)visioning 'Place' in the Pacific." *The Contemporary Pacific* 13 (2): 467–507.
- Gegeo, David Welchman, and Karen Watson-Gegeo. 2001. "How We Know: Kwara'ae Rural Villagers Doing Indigenous Epistemology." *The Contemporary Pacific* 13 (1): 55–88.
- Geismar, Haidy. 2013. *Treasured Possessions: Indigenous Interventions into Cultural and Intellectual Property*. Objects/histories: Critical Perspectives on Art, Material Culture, and Representation. Durham: Duke University Press.

- Geismer, Haidy. 2008. "Cultural Property, Museums, and the Pacific: Reframing the Debates." *International Journal of Cultural Property* 15 (2): 109–22.
- Gell, Alfred. 1993. *Wrapping in Images: Tattooing in Polynesia*. Oxford Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology. Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press.
- . 1998. *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Gosden, Chris, and Chantal Knowles. 2001. *Collecting Colonialism: Material Culture and Colonial Change*. Oxford; New York: Berg.
- Hau'ofa, Epeli. 2008. *We Are the Ocean: Selected Works*. University of Hawaii Press.
- Henare, Amiria. 2004. "Rewriting the Script: Te Papa Tongarewa the Museum of New Zealand." *Social Analysis* 48 (1): 55–63.
- Henare, Amiria J. M. 2005. *Museums, Anthropology and Imperial Exchange*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Henare, Amiria J. M., Martin Holbraad, and Sari Wastell, eds. 2007. *Thinking through Things: Theorising Artefacts Ethnographically*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Hereniko, Vilsoni. 1994. "Clowning as Political Commentary: Polynesia, Then and Now." *The Contemporary Pacific* 6 (1): 1–28.
- . 1995. *Woven Gods: Female Clowns and Power in Rotuma*. University of Hawaii Press.
- Herewini, Te Herekietie, and June Jones. 2016. "A Partnership Approach to Repatriation: Building the Bridge from Both Sides." *Tuhinga* 27: 1–9.
- Herle, Anita, Field Museum of Natural History, and Pacific Arts Association (1974–), eds. 2002. *Pacific Art: Persistence, Change, and Meaning*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Hooper-Greenhill, Eilean. 1992. *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*. Heritage. London; New York: Routledge.

- . 2000a. *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*. Museum Meanings 4. New York: Routledge.
- . 2000b. "Speaking for Herself? Hinemihi and Her Discourse." In *Museums and the Representation of Visual Culture*, pp.49–75. London: Routledge.
- Hutton, Grace, Safua Akeli, and Sean Mallon. n.d. "Rediscovering the Collection: Cook Islands Material Culture in the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa." *Tuhinga* 21: 99–123.
- Ingold, Tim. 2013. *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture*. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Jahnke, Robert, and A.-Chr Engels-Schwarzpaul. 2013. "A Creative Journey: By Māori For Māori." In *Of Other Thoughts: Non-Traditional Ways to the Doctorate*, edited by A.-Chr Engels-Schwarzpaul and Michael A. Peters, 297–309. Sense Publishers.
- http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-94-6209-317-1_24.
- Janes, Robert R. 2009. *Museums in a Troubled World: Renewal, Irrelevance or Collapse?* 1 edition. London; New York: Routledge.
- Jolly, Margaret. 1992. "Specters of Inauthenticity." *The Contemporary Pacific* 4 (1): 49–72.
- . 2011. "Becoming a 'New' Museum?: Contesting Oceanic Visions at Musée Du Quai Branly." *The Contemporary Pacific* 23 (1): 108–39.
- . 2016. "Moving Objects: Reflections on Oceanic Collections." *The Contemporary Pacific* 28 (2): 281–314. doi:10.1353/cp.2016.0049.
- Kaeppler, Adrienne L. 2008. *The Pacific Arts of Polynesia and Micronesia*. OUP Oxford.
- Kaeppler, Adrienne Lois. 1978. "*Artificial Curiosities*": *Being an Exposition of Native Manufactures Collected on the Three Pacific Voyages of Captain James Cook, R. N., at the*

- Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum, January 18, 1978-August 31, 1978, on the Occasion of the Bicentennial of the European Discovery of the Hawaiian Islands by Captain Cook, January 18, 1778.* Bishop Museum Press.
- Kahn, Miriam. 1995. "Heterotopic Dissonance in the Museum Representation of Pacific Island Cultures." *American Anthropologist* 97 (2): 324–38.
- Kahn, Miriam, Erin Younger, and Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture, eds. 2005. *Pacific Voices: Keeping Our Cultures Alive.* Seattle: University of Washington Press in association with Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture.
- Kaplan, Flora S., ed. 1994. *Museums and the Making of "Ourselves": The Role of Objects in National Identity.* London; New York: New York: Leicester University Press; Distributed in the U.S. and Canada by St. Martin's Press.
- Karp, Ivan, Christine Mullen Kreamer, Steven Lavine, and Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, eds. 1992. *Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture.* Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Kelly, John D. 2000. "Nature, Natives, and Nations: Glorification and Asymmetries in Museum Representation, Fiji and Hawaii." *Ethnos* 65 (2): 195–216.
doi:10.1080/00141840050076897.
- Kjellgren, Eric, ed. 2014. *How to Read Oceanic Art.* How to Read 3. New York: New Haven: Metropolitan Museum of Art; Distributed by Yale University Press.
- Knowles, Chantal. 2013. "Artifacts in Waiting: Altered Agency of Museum Objects." In *Reassembling the Collection: Ethnographic Museums and Indigenous Agency.* Santa Fe, NM: School for Advanced Research.

- Kosasa, Karen K. 2007. "Life in the Pacific of the 1700s: The Cook/Forster Collection of the George August University of Gottingen (review)." *The Contemporary Pacific* 19 (1): 344–45.
- Lonetree, Amy. 2009. "Museums as Sites of Decolonization." In *Contesting Knowledge: Museums and Indigenous Perspectives*. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press.
- Lonetree, Amy, and Amanda J. Cobb. 2008. *The National Museum of the American Indian: Critical Conversations*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Lorde, Audre. 2007. "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House." In *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, 110–14. Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press.
- Mallon, Sean, and Grace Hutton. 2013. "Collecting, Exhibiting and Engaging with East Polynesia at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa." *Tuhinga* 24: 105–37.
- Mead, Sidney M., and American Federation of Arts, eds. 1985. *Te Maori: Maori Art from New Zealand Collections*. Rev. New York: Abrams in association with the American Federation of Arts.
- Message, Kylie. 2006. *New Museums and the Making of Culture*. Oxford, UK; New York: Berg.
- Meyer, Manulani Aluli. 2014. "Indigenous Epistemology: Spirit Revealed." In *Enhancing Mātauranga Māori and Global Indigenous Knowledge*, 151–64. Manulania Aluli Meyer.
- Mikaere, Ani. 2011. "Some Implications of a Maori Worldview." In *Colonising Myths. Maori Realities. He Ruruku Whakaaro*, 307–22. Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand: Huia Press.
- Miller, Daniel. 2010. *Stuff*. Polity.
- Neller, Angela J. 2002. "From Utilitarian to Sacred: The Transformation of a Traditional Hawaiian Object." In *Pacific Art: Persistence, Change, and Meaning*, 126–38. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

- Newell, Jenny. 2012. "Old Objects, New Media: Historical Collections, Digitization and Affect." *Journal of Material Culture* 17 (3): 287–306.
- Ngata, Wayne, Hera Ngata-Gibson, and Amiria Salmond. 2012. "Te Ataakura: Digital Taonga and Cultural Innovation." *Journal of Material Culture* 17 (3): 229–44.
- Ouzman, Sven. 2006. "The Beauty of Letting Go: Fragmentary Museums and Archeologies of Archive." In *Sensible Objects: Colonialism, Museums and Material Culture*. Oxford; New York: Berg.
- "Pacific Research Protocols from the University of Otago." 2013. *The Contemporary Pacific* 25 (1): 95–124.
- Pearce, Susan M., ed. 1994. *Interpreting Objects and Collections*. Leicester Readers in Museum Studies. London; New York: Routledge.
- Peers, Laura. 2007. *Playing Ourselves: Interpreting Native Histories at Historic Reconstructions*. Rowman Altamira.
- Peers, Laura L., and Alison K. Brown, eds. 2003. *Museums and Source Communities: A Routledge Reader*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Phillips, Ruth B. 2000. "APEC at the Museum of Anthropology: The Politics of Site and the Poetics of Sight Bite." *Ethnos* 65 (2): 172–94. doi:10.1080/00141840050076888.
- Pomian, Krzysztof. 1991. *Collectors and Curiosities*. 1 edition. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge, Mass., USA: Polity.
- Raymond, Rosanna, Amiria Manutahi Salmond, and Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, eds. 2008. *Pasifika Styles: Artists inside the Museum*. Cambridge, Eng.: Dunedin: University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology; Otago University Press.

- Restoring Bishop Museum's Hawaiian Hall Ho'i Hou Ka Wena I Kaiwi'ula*. 2009. Honolulu, HI: Bishop Museum Press.
- Salmond, Amiria, and Anne Salmond. 2010. "Artefacts of Encounter." *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews* 35 (3-4): 302–17.
- Schlereth, Thomas J., ed. 1999. *Material Culture Studies in America: An Anthology*. Walnut Creek, Calif: AltaMira Press.
- Simpson, Audra. 2014. *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life across the Borders of Settler States*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Simpson, Moira G. 2001. *Making Representations: Museums in the Post-Colonial Era*. Rev. ed. The Heritage. London; New York: Routledge.
- Sleeper-Smith, Susan, ed. 2009. *Contesting Knowledge: Museums and Indigenous Perspectives*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Smith, Bernard. 1950. "European Vision and the South Pacific." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 13 (1/2): 65–100. doi:10.2307/750143.
- Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. 2012. *Decolonizing Methodologies*. Zed Books.
- Smith, Paul Chaat. 2008. "Critical Reflections on the Our Peoples Exhibit." In *The National Museum of the American Indian: Critical Conversations*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Stanley, Nick. 2007. *The Future of Indigenous Museums: Perspectives from the Southwest Pacific*. Berghahn Books.
- Stella, Regis Tove. 2007. *Imagining the Other: The Representations of Papua New Guineans Subject*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press.

- Stocking, George W., ed. 1985. *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture*. History of Anthropology, v. 3. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Szczepanowska, Hanna M. 2013. *Conservation of Cultural Heritage: Key Principles and Approaches*. London: Routledge.
- Taisi Efi, Tui Atua Tamasese. 2005. "Clutter in Indigenous Knowledge, Research and History: A Samoan Perspective." *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand* 25 (July): 61–69.
- Tamaira, A. Marata, ed. 2009. *The Space between: Negotiating Culture, Place, and Identity in the Pacific*. Occasional Paper 44. Honolulu: Center for Pacific Islands Studies, School of Hawaiian, Asian & Pacific Studies, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.
- Tapsell, Paul. 1997. "The Flight of Pareraututu: An Investigation of Taonga From a Tribal Perspective." *The Journal of the Polynesian Society* 106 (4): 323–74.
- Teaiwa, Teresia K. 2016. "The Classroom as a Metaphorical Canoe: Co-Operative Learning in Pacific Studies." *The Contemporary Pacific* forthcoming.
- Tengan, Ty Kawika. 2005. "Unsettling Ethnography: Tales of an 'Oiwī in the Anthropological Slot." *Anthropological Forum* 15 (3): 247–56.
- The Putaiora Writing Group. n.d. *Te Ara Tika Guidelines for Maori Research Ethics: A Framework for Researchers and Ethics Committee Members*. New Zealand: Health Research Council of New Zealand.
- Thomas, Nicholas. 1991. *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- . 1995. *Oceanic Art*. World of Art. New York, NY: Thames and Hudson.
- . 1996a. "From Exhibit to Exhibitionism: Recent Polynesian Presentations of 'Otherness.'" *The Contemporary Pacific* 8 (2): 319–48.

- . 1996b. “The Dream of Joseph: Practices of Identity in Pacific Art.” *The Contemporary Pacific* 8 (2): 291–317.
- Ulrich, Laurel Thatcher, Ivan Gaskell, Sara Schechner, Sarah Anne Carter, and Samantha van Gerbig. 2015. *Tangible Things: Making History through Objects*. Oxford University Press.
- Wilson, Angela Cavender, and Michael Yellow Bird. 2005. *For Indigenous Eyes Only: A Decolonization Handbook*. School of American Research.
- Wood, Houston. 2003. “Cultural Studies for Oceania.” *The Contemporary Pacific* 15 (2): 340–74.